# THE ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF NAZI GERMANY: 1933-39

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## Synopsis

This thesis consists of two major sections. The first part is a description of the intellectual framework which underpinned the aesthetic thinking and cultural policies of the Nazis in the period 1933-39. The second section is an analysis of a selected number of paintings and buildings in order to uncover the contradictions which were embedded in these cultural artefacts. This part of the analysis sets out a brief historical resumé of some early attempts at the creation of a mass-based art, and explores the transformations which this process engendered in the traditional modes of European high art.

This analysis of Nazi art attempts to relate both the form and the content of the artefacts to the wider context of the clash between the Nazi movement as a mass based populistic political phenomenon and its later retrenchment in the form of a highly stratified caste system based upon the totalitarian concentration of power in a strong absolutistic state.

The final section attempts to encompass certain extra-aesthetic phenomena such as parades, rallies and war memorials, in order to illustrate this working out of the basic contradiction in Nazi aesthetics throughout the whole fabric of their political spectacle.

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## Introduction

"For three centuries the attempts to realise a normative classicism were no more than brief, artificial constructions speaking the eternal language of the state, the absolute monarchy, or the revolutionary bourgeoisie dressed in Roman clothes".

Guy Debord(i)

This thesis has two major aims: firstly to describe in fairly close detail the theory and practise of the Nazi regime in the realm of the arts between the years 1933-1939. Secondly to analyse why this practise was a failure. In using the term 'failure' however, two major assumptions are being made. (i) The Nazi practise in some way fell short of its stated aims. (ii) There exists a comparative set of practises which can be regarded as more 'successful'.

Thus the opening section of this thesis is an attempt to give these 'successful' artistic practises some content, so that we will be in a position to move on to the Nazi period with some comparative information at hand. Behind the whole of this opening section will be the central category of a cultural/artistic revolution which has always accompanied in a muted fashion, until recently, the more closely documented economic and political revolutions of 19th. and 20th. century Europe. However the category of cultural revolution is even more central to the analysis since in many instances I have taken the rhetoric of the Nazis at face value, which means that one has to consider seriously their claims that they were creating a revolutionary form for German culture. I want to relate this 'failure' by the Nazis at artistic revolution to some other historical moments when cultural revolution was the order of the day, in order to shed light on the difficulties they experienced. The examples I have chosen are almost all from occasions when socialist politics and avant-garde artistic experimentation attempted some kind of harmonious sysnthesis.

At first sight it might appear that to bring together an analysis of Nazism and the other two traditions must inevitably be tinged with irony and tragedy since the events which took place in Germany during the thirties offer perhaps the most complete example of the liquidation of these two latter traditions at the hands of the former. The most immediate link between them would seem to be the obvious one of exile, terror and the concentration camp. What I hope to establish, however, is that a much deeper connection was operating between these three elements. The political and physical suppression by the Nazis of the German labour movement and the artistic avant-garde was a variation (albeit the radical right-wing one) of the continuing historical project to locate and produce a 'revolutionary' form for the culture and art of Europe. The Nazis form a third term in a trinity of such attempts which have aimed at being rid once and for all of the culture and art of bourgeois industrial capitalism. This is why I maintain that the Nazi 'revolution' has to be analysed and finally judged alongside other such attempts which have taken place within European history.

In the latter half of the thesis I have restricted my analysis of actual Nazi art products to the areas of architecture and painting. But I obviously see these as examples of a much more general problematic confronting the traditional forms of European high art. What is the impact of, and what are the transformations engendered in those forms by, the process of political revolution? How radical are the implications for high art of the term 'cultural revolution'? To confront truthfully either of these questions it is necessary to look closely at what took place in the tradition of the artistic avant-garde, a tradition which the left and the right have ignored at their peril. At the same time there has been

a failure by the avant-garde to generate any consistent political implications from their artistic practise, and this has resulted in their being confined to a 'ghetto of the spirit', a situation increasingly dominated by barren formalistic experimentation. This anguished containment is the result of their failure "to search for the real historic occasions when such a supercession (of bourgeois art) becomes possible; the moment when the masses arise and seize their destiny in their own hands." (2)

Thus, in this opening section, I want to situate the Nazi cultural practise within this wider historical and theoretical context. Whatever the distorted nature of the 'debate' which took place about art during their rule, they still had to address themselves to this central problematic: how would Nazi cultural practise both suppress and transcend bourgeois modes of art? Their failure to resolve matters successfully was not a partial phenomenon, only to do with aesthetics, but was symptomatic of their total reading of the trajectory of the Nazi movement and its inability to go beyond capitalism as the major organising principle for the whole society. Their failure in artistic matters was part of a general revolutionary failure which had its roots in their social and economic policies. The art they produced was a shoddy, archaic version of that of the bourgeoisie. As one commentator said after the dust of 1933 had settled "Can the explanation be that, like the concept Volk, (the national socialist revolution) is merely a wish projection, a fiction disguising an unchanged reality? There are few signs in contemporary Germany that a revolution, in the technical sense of a transfer of power from class to class, has taken place." (3)

The French Revolution

During the Jacobin phase of the French revolution, and particularly with David, the chief artistic representative of that political tendency,

various tentative alternatives to the tradition of 'high art' were tried out. During his artistic and political career, a variety of 'solutions' were attempted in answer to the central problem of the relationship of the 'people' to an art which claims revolutionary status. His central concern was to find a form for the art object that would be adequate to the social and political dimensions of the Jacobin revolution. David is important because he is the first to raise what I think are the three major dimensions of the problem we are dealing with:

(i) The relationship within the art object between the revolutionary form and revolutionary content.

(ii) The transformation of the social conditions under which artistic production takes place.

(iii) The problem of the role of the state towards a revolutionary policy for the arts, i.e. its role as mediator between artist and the people and also as the generator of a new art form in the role of patron and aesthetic guardian of the revolution.

1. The Revolution of Content:

Before tackling David's response to these problems we must look at the nature of painting in France prior to the Revolution. Before 1789, David's major problem had been one of appropriating the visual language in which French painting had been cast and redirecting it for other ends. His task had been, within the area of painting, one of breaking the hegemony of the then dominant class, the landed aristocracy, and transforming it into a weapon which would articulate the aims and interests of the rising middle class. At this stage it had largely meant the manipulation of neo-classical iconography, of operating within this tradition and yet at the same time subverting it. This strategy was still possible because the

neo-classical language was still able to encompass and express the outlook of this rising class. It was able to contain within it the possibility of such a redirection. The classical mode was still a viable vehicle for the two classes to fight out their conflict. Before the work performed by David, French neo-classical painting had provided the landed aristocracy with an idealised and mystified vision of their situation within the totality of French society. We can see this by briefly comparing the 'neo-classicism' of Watteau and David (Illustration No: 1)

In paintings like this, the aristocracy were able to imagine themselves inhabiting a realm of pure hedonism and play. The scenario, which is always developed in these paintings, is consistently set within the bounds of an idealised country park, where the inhabitants seem to brush shoulders with pagan and neo-classical elements. The gardens and the people depicted in them appear to be entirely self-sufficient, having little or no connection with a geographical or social surround, either in terms of an inflow of wealth or of the 'export' of power or government. (In the Watteau painting depicted above, the characters are leaving this idealised playground for even greater heights of pleasure.) David's intrusion into this neo-classical realm of pure pleasure at first does not attempt to rupture the myth by the introduction of elements from contemporary reality, he simply makes his point by shifting his ground within the general terrain of classical imagery.

(Illustration No: 2 ) By espousing the Roman element of ancient history and also by the twin operations of (i) formally and compositionally purifying the depiction of the myth, amd (ii) banishing the values of playfullness in favour of sterner values such as struggle, dedication and sacrifice, he was able to subvert the form and make it serve the aims of

the rising middle class. These aims took the form of a demand for the reforming of the state and society, plus a thinly disguised plea for their political take-over. This message was both clear and concise, transparently obvious to the Parisian bourgeoisie who flocked to admire the painting when it was first placed on display. Classicism, as a vehicle for the dialogue between the two opposing classes, was still viable and had not yet reached its crisis point. This was to happen only when the explosive content of the slogans 'Liberty - Equality - Fraternity' were made clear. Only forty-five years later when Delacroix again used the classical mode for his painting on the ceiling of the Galerie d'Apollon (this time to proclaim a blatantly reactionary message) no-one grasped the political message embedded in the writhing figures. Classical iconography had become a private hermetic language, no longer able to articulate generally its hatred of the 1848 republic. "Wholly absorbed in the production of wealth and in peaceful competitive struggle, it no longer comprehended that ghosts from the days of Rome had watched over its cradle. But unheroic as bourgeois society is, it nevertheless took heroism, sacrifice, terror, civil war and battles of people to bring it into being. And in the classically austere traditions of the Roman republic its gladiators found the ideals and the art forms, the self-deceptions that they needed in order to conceal from themselves the bourgeois content of their struggles.." (4)

2. The Problem of the State:

David's wholehearted identification with the Jacobin state led to a further development of this dialectic between form and content, and at the same time raised the problem of the role of the revolutionary state and its attitude towards the artistic policies appropriate to a period of social revolution. If the painting of the past was identified with an aristocracy

now deposed, what form should the 'new art' take? What was the line which the revolutionary state should adopt towards the problem of painting and art generally? David's first 'solution' was to push the development of the pictures' content. In 1790 he was asked to paint a picture which would immortalise the transference of power from one class to another. His response was the painting 'The Tennis Court Oath'. (Illustration No. 3 ) What he does here is to simply clothe his Roman actors in modern dress. The principles of the painting's composition, the painting style, are all text-book examples of everything which the Royal Academy had stood for, "only the clothes have been changed..." The Jacobin state's response was to call upon artists to illustrate and depict both revolutionary heroes and those high points of exemplary political activity. The Assembly and the Committee for Public Safety conceived of the role of the arts as twofold: (i) To stand as a record of its best moments and its greatest heroes, e.g.'The Marat'.

(ii) As a form of pedagogy, both to instruct and inform the people of their revolutionary duty.

"The Committee of Public Instruction has considered the arts in all the relations that should make them contribute to the further progress of the human spirit, to propagate and transmit to posterity the striking example of a vast people, guided by reason and philosophy, bringing back on earth the reign of liberty, equality and the laws. The arts then should primarily contribute to public instruction.....the genius of the arts should be worthy of the people it enlightens."(5)

Thus from the outset the state demanded an art of the exemplary revolutionary situation and of the exemplary revolutionary citizen. It was a demand for the simple changing of content, a demand which because of the seemingly harmonious unity of art-object and political practise

allowed the state to transmit its desires directly to the artists without contradiction: "The day after the assassination of Marat, the anniversary of the 14th July, the opportunity presented itself before the Convention to express the people's sorrow. It's spokesman, a certain Guiralut, said 'Oh shameful crime! A patricidal hand has struck down the most fearless defender of the people. He had dedicated himself to libery. Our eyes still search for him among you. Representatives! Oh horrible spectacle! He lies on his death bed. Where are you David?.....there is still another picture for you to do..' 'Yes I shall do it, cried David, deeply moved.' (6)

At this stage the state's demand for an adequate revolutionary art which was 'public', and the desires of the revolutionary artists stand in a harmonious unity. The problem is that a hundred and twenty years later the state's conception of a 'revolutionary art' had unfortunately remained static. It still required an art which was an <u>illustration</u> of the revolution, an art which quickly turns into portraits of leaders and statues of dead saints. This deceptive harmony had one disruptive factor however, the 'people'. The problem of 'the people' was to elicit a different response from David, one which he was to keep separate from his 'revolution of content'. At this early stage of his development the response to his new audience is tame: "The people who pressed in to see 'The Oath' included workers and peasants, as well as educated folk'.(7)

3. The Conditions of Artistic Production:

The final aspect of David's attempt to create a revolutionary art simply by-passes altogether his work within the frame of the picture, and the creation of art-objects. I think that I have shown that his development of the content of his paintings went no further than the limitations of the Jacobin state of which he was a supporter. These limitations were also to remain those of the revolutionary state. However he tackled the problems of the conditions under which artistic production took place and especially

when he grappled with the problem of a mass-based art, he produced a series of totally different solutions. The problems which confronted him at this point can be summarised thus:

(i) How to invent a means of artistic distribution to by-pass the old Academy dominated structures?

(ii) How to invent and create a new public for 'art', and also destroy the old one?

(iii) How to make ''art' popular?

Only one theme is absent from this list, but is I think implicitly contained in these three formulations: What should the attitude of the revolutionary artist be to the culture and art of the past? David's first concern was with the institutional framework of the practise of painting, with the artistic community. In this area he is very definitely a child of the Enlightenment. His targets are privilege and prejudice. These must be swept away and reason applied to the organisation of artistic activity. The key slogan here is equality of opportunity. At least the Academy must undergo radical reform, and the practise of the arts opened up to those with talent: "Oh, you talents lost to posterity! Great men left in neglect! I will placate your spirits, you shall be avenged: it was your misfortune, illustrious victims, to have lived under kings, ministers, Academicians". (8)

What started as a reform of the Academy, however, ended up as an all out attack upon its existence. During 1792 David set up his Commune of the Arts, which was intended to recruit painters from the whole of France and from every section of the population. By 1793 the Academy was abolished and the 'Popular Society of the Arts', under the leadership of David, was set up in its place. Again this was seen as an important step in the democratisation of access and of practise; an attempt to make art

accessible to those workers and peasants who had crowded in to view the 'Tennis Court Oath'. But 'the people' were seen as an homogeneous mass, and the fact that the society was not immediately crowded out with peasant painters did not strike him as peculiar. The Jacobin philosophy was a strange mixture of components, and whilst there was certainly a broadening out of the artistic profession making it accessible to the lower sections of the bourgeoisie (the jury set up to judge paintings would include 'farm-workers, shoe-makers, soldiers as well as artists') the true general democratisation of the arts never took place under its auspices. The brief governing the activities of the 'Society of the Arts' stated: "the arts so far only pandered to the taste of leisured people; now they must make their appeal to the men who work". (9)

Thus David tried to solve our three initial questions by democratising the institutions for the recruitment of artists, and to this end he attempted to bring 'the people' into the administration of these institutions; but the notion that painting itself was a class-based practise and would be shattered totally by the entrance of the people never occurred to him. High art was still seen as universally acessible.

The last aspect of David's work which I want to examine concerns the radical formal experiments he undertook in order "to appeal to the men who work". It is at this point that a completely different set of alternatives present themselves, alternatives that were to prove the most radical and far reaching in their implications for the rest of the century, and the full significance of what he was doing never fully revealed itself to David at the time. One of the problems which the brief of the 'Popular Society of the Arts' directed itself towards was the 'relation of art to the broad masses'. The search for truly meaningful popularity led him to try to ditch/by pass the whole idea of an art of revolutionary illustration. It was to this end that he started to organised the revolutionary festivals,

which initially were to be staged in Paris, but were intended to become a feature of every large town in France. David saw these festivals as: "a national art with mass participation".(10) "The national festivals are instituted for the people; it is fitting that they participate in them with a common accord and that they play the principal role there". (11)

These festivals were of course dressed up in the clothes of the Enlightenment, and were to reach their high point in the Parisian 'Feasts of Reason'. Having recognised this however, they can only be fully comprehended if a number of things are borne in mind. Firstly they were instigated as an art-form that emerged from the aesthetic realm; secondly they were an art-form that had as its expressed intention the creation of a true mass-base. Thirdly they are just one part of a whole battery of measures of this type taken to revolutionise French culture generally. Thus they must always be seen alongside such things as the restructuring of the calendar, the plans drawn up by David for the rebuilding of all the major French cities on a general plan of amenities and sanitation,etc. These mass festivals are also the complement of his attempts to design republican clothes and uniforms, especially his project to introduce a standardised, rational suit of clothes for civilian wear. This push for the complete reorganisation of life and culture did not only stop at the present, but, as implied earlier, was to extend to the past as well. Its destruction was seen as essential to this grand plan, as a way of freeing the present from the grip of past culture.

"Project submitted in 1800, by Petit Rodel, Inspector-General of Civil Structures to the Salon.

516 Destruction of a church in the Gothic style, by means of fire. In order to minimise the dangers which this kind of operation entails, the piers are to be hollowed, near the bases, at a height of two stone courses. As stones are removed, half their volume is replaced by dry wood. This is

continued throughout. Kindling is then inserted, and fire set to the wood. When enough of the wood has burned, it gives way under the weight of the masonry, and the whole structure collapses in less than ten minutes."(12)

David's career during the French revolution is important because of the wide range of responses that were elicited from him in relation to the problem of the relation of art to the revolutionary movement. These responses can be reduced to a number of issues:

(i) The problem of what takes place within the frame: the change of form (in David's case it is restricted more to the content than the style) as artistic implications are generated by revolutionary political practise.

(ii) The role and the position of the state as the bearer of the ideals and values of the revolution.

(iii) The conditions under which artistic production takes place, especially the institutional framework surrounding art. Again, as I have indicated, reforms which merely limit themselves to democratisation of access and do not understand the class-based nature of all 'high art' can only have a limited contribution to make in the development of a revolutionary art.

(iv) Finally the problem of the effect which the eruption of the 'mass', 'the people' and 'the proletariat' upon the political arena has upon the idea of what constitutes a mass-based art form.

David provides an early, but very concise outline of the strategies which could be adopted in the search for a revolutionary art-form. At this stage it would be fruitless to argue whether the mass festivals of the revolutionary period were proto-Nuremburgs or socialist festivity. They constitute two variations upon a single underlying problematic for the arts in a revolutionary period and as such remain potentialities, possible

directions for the arts to take under the impact of mass revolutionary movements, whether of the radical right or of the left.

Modern Solutions:

"I say it is the aims of art that you must seek rather than art itself." W. Morris I.

"Novels did not always exist in the past, nor must they necessarily exist in the future." W. Benjamin II.

One of the most prominent features of the artistic practise in Western Europe during the 19th, century was the rise, and the persistence of the avant-garde, which was to resultin its gradual domination of the realm of high art. Damned initially, the avant-garde in its decline has gradually become synonymous with the high art tradition it set out to destroy and supplant. At the beginning of this thesis I suggested that as far as artistic matters were concerned, the Nazis were addressing themselves to a central problematic located within western art; for them this was typified by the persistence of the avant-garde. The presence of this loose tradition in Europe ever since the rise of the Romantic movement is a symptom of the deep separation which arose in this art between the realms of 'private' and 'public'. In a sense the Nazi 'revolution' was a settling of accounts with this thorn in the side of western culture. Their solution to this problem was to take the form of a one-sided, political obliteration in the name of creating a truly collective German culture. This culture would be characterised by:

(i) Having none of the features of the art of the avant-garde.

(ii) It would somehow be its polar opposite; that is, a form of regenerated culture that would come into being because the totality of the social conditions under which art was produced would be transformed.

In this section I want to try to locate and analyse some of the

features of this avant-garde, and at the same time try to bring out what I feel to be its ghostly opposite: an opposite which in its absence haunted the experience of this tradition and was the holy grail of the Nazi artistic revolution.

Characteristics of the Avant-Garde:

Any hard, or inflexible, use of the term 'avant-garde' is a major step towards fetishising what was essentially a very loose tradition. This tradition, which more often than not took the form of a state of mind, was a set of unspoken assumptions, which were held by individual artists at different stages of their artistic careers. There is a constant process in many of the major artistic figures of the 19th. century of persistently sliding in and out of this spiritual homeland: of espousing its values and of petulantly disowning them. Having said this, certain definitional characteristics can be picked out as symptomatic of this tradition. The major 'objective' feature of the avant-garde was that it provided a means whereby certain sections of the artistic and cultural bourgeois intelligentsia were able to maintain the idea of separation from the values and culture of the dominant class, from which they originated. In terms of the values espoused by this tradition, which historically appears for the first time with the rise of Romanticism, they rested firmly upon the rejection of any utilitarian or instrumental notions of the universe and of man. At various times it opposed the penetration of the social order by these values, and identified their permeation as the work of the commercial operations of the industrial bourgeoisie . Within the realm of the aesthetic which the avant-garde exalted over all others the production of 'beauty' was underpinned by hedonism and extreme individualism. Whilst the objects produced were almost always closely linked with the expression of a personal reality, a personal vision, the avant-garde's dominant reference was the

exploration of the subjective, of 'pure' sensation, by use of an increasingly private and closed system of symbolism. With the members of the avant-garde there are a plethora of private visions but few public standards. In addition to this, various ideological strategies were adopted to shore-up, or escape from, this marginal and isolated existence, e.g. primitivism, nostalgia, exoticism, despair, and self-annihilation. Thus in almost every case the practise of the arts within this tradition would mean:

(i) That art, both as object and activity, would be subjective and private.

(ii) It would entail ideologically one of a number of species of radical refusals of the 'world of the bourgeois'.

Certain features flowed out of the marginal position accorded to the aesthetic, especially in the attitude of the artist towards the public domain. The area of generalised social activity became a forbidden zone for art which was either to be condemned or at least kept at bay by a spiritual distanciation. The avant-garde artists throughout Europe came to inhabit a ghetto of the soul , which at certain moments was to find even a geographical expression. However these qualities of refusal and rebellion lead straight back to the public realm whether it was to spit on it or at the site of their 'lost' audience. Any form of re-entry into this area could only be genuinely acheived if the domain itself were to undergo a radical alteration. Hence the continual nervousness of the avant-garde in its relationship with the 'outside', and the frequent use of such phrases as 'compromise', 'bad-faith', 'sell-out', etc. The artists of the avant-garde shared that common tendency of the dislocated European intelligentsia to view the domain of the private individual as being the only area where an authentic mode of existence was possible, whilst the public was to become equated with that which was alienating and non-valid. However, as Marx pointed out, the mental split into public and private spheres were only the phenomenal forms of a dialectically linked unity.

Even in the 1840's Baudelaire was still able to encompass both ends of this dialectic in artistic matters: "Romanticism means modern art that is intimacy, spirituality, aspiration for the infinite expressed with all the means open to the arts."(3) "Hitherto art is inseparable from utility" (4) "How to exploit one's privacy, and the insights which it allows, and yet at the same time escape from it." (5)

The Public Realm:

If we can characterise art of the European avant-garde through the following features, then we can at the same time conceptualise the type of 'art' that would display those features which were opposite to this.

| A | B |
|---|---|
| private | public |
| individualistic | communal |
| subjective | objective |
| elitist | popular |

political action

Within the socialist tradition, there also lies, at least at a theoretical level, the possibility of a revolution producing a situation where these dialectic opposites are superceded. However at the present stage of the argument I want to look at the nature of the concepts in the right-hand column, since they bear most strongly upon the Nazi project.

In terms of our schema the one thing that has united both the radical right and the left is the centrality of the linking concept of political action as a means of breaking down, and replacing, the avant-garde art which is seen as so symptomatic of bourgeois society. Destruction of the conditions which produce this art is equated with a revolution encompassing every aspect of society. Every one of the categories in list B automatically raises implications about the nature of the society in which such

characteristics would be displayed. Public implies that the art objects deal with general and universal topics, as well as being in some way connected with the general institutions of the society. Communal implies that they are capable of being shared by the whole of society, in fact that there is a genuine community, including a cultural one in which all can participate equally. Objective implies that the material of art, its form and its content, has practical ends, in that it is capable of entering and shaping reality in terms of a commonly held vision. Finally the category popular implies that both audience and producers share a common reality and that there is a continual movement between the producers and receivers of such art. Now on almost every count bourgeois society in the 19th. century was incapable of producing such a structured domain for artistic practise. In every society of Western Europe in the 19th. century the rise of, and the domination by, the industrial bourgeoisie had been a two-fold project:

(i) Firstly there was a revolutionary phase dedicated to sweeping away the remnants of feudalism.

(ii) The introduction and elaboration of an economy devoted to the unfettered production of commodities and the accumulation of capital.

This project took on a variety of forms, and was acheived by the forging of various types of class alliances; but central to its aim was the political task of capturing the state and the social task of reorganising society in order to guarantee its economic aims as a class. The problem was that after the establishment of its rule, and after the 'heroic' revolutionary phase had passed, the bourgeois state was never able to acheive a general status for the whole of society. The bourgeoisie were never a general class and if interested at all in art tended to clothe themselves in imagery and the symbolism of the class they had just usurped.

This threefold project, embracing the political, the social and the economic reorganisation of society, resulted in the gradual penetration of all social relationships by economic and commercial values; life was reduced to a set of 'unheroic' values which contrasted strongly with the spirituality and non-utilitarian nature of Post-romantic art. Thus the artistic critique of bourgeois society was directed against the poverty of the spirit and the sterility of life which bourgeois society had brought into being. Again Marx put his finger on the gulf between the bourgeoisie's image of themselves in art, and the nature of the world they had created: "Is the view of nature and of the social relations which shaped the Greek imagination and Greek art possible in the age of automatic machinery and railways, of locomotives and electric telegraphs? Where does Vulcan come in against Roberts and Co.? Jupiter as against the lightning rod, and Hermes against the Credit Mobilier ? What becomes of the goddess Fame by the side of Printing House Square?" (6)

The answer was that they were stuck of the facades of banks, parliament buildings, Opera houses and war memorials. Thus the avant-garde artist of the 19th. century could adopt any one of three strategies towards his position of marginality and ineffectiveness upon the world at large. Firstly he could try and ignore bourgeois society (l'art pour l'art),- or he could join it, or he could attack it. Those who attempted the last strategy and tried to explore a kind of art which at least modified the features of our list A, were thrown back to the recurrent list of problems that we found had confronted David at an earlier period.

(i) How could a new audience for one's art be created, and, by implication, an audience that would transform the public realm, through political action, towards the features in list B.

(ii) What were the implications for the practise of art itself which this shift of audience entailed? Could the old ways be retained, or would the whole thing have to be recast anew? Will, in the opening words of

William Morris, only the 'aims of art' be left intact?

In answer to these questions it would be safe to say that within 19th.century painting only certain members of the realist school really consciously tried to develop a new aesthetic to meetthese demands. The realist attack upon bourgeois society was centered around the unreality of 'their' art in contrast to the type of society they were bringing into existence. This took the form of reconsidering the style and the content of painting, but all the time holding the frame of the picture as a constant. Thier radicalism was extended only so far as advocating the elevation of the everyday, the mundane, and the working class as topics suitable for the hallowed space within the frame. This process can be seen in the notes which Madox-Brown made to accompany his painting 'Work': "At that time (1852) extensive excavations were going on in the neighbourhood, and, seeing and studying daily as I did the British excavator, or navvy as he is designated, in the full swing of his activity....it appeared to me that he was at least as worthy of the powers of an English painter as the fishermen of the Adriatic, the peasant of the Campagna, or the Neapolitan lazzarone...." (7)

In this type of outlook, the media of painting is accepted and unquestioned, the radicalism of the art becomes a matter of its content, that is the depiction of the bearers of the new reality, i.e. the working class in their present misery. The simple <u>illustration</u> of this 'forgotten' class, and the world they were helping to forge, was considered to be a sufficient method to puncture bourgeois 'unreality'. In England the furthest that any radicalisation of form went was in the famous trench-digging expedition led by Ruskin, whilst in France Courbet busied himself with pulling down monuments erected to tyrants. With the gradual decline of the realist thrust the avant-garde enters the period of hectic formal experimentation, which superficially breaks off contact with the subject of the realist

critique of bourgeois society. From this point onwards any alliance between the avant-garde and the socialist movement will have implications that are much more radical than the simple revolution of content.

The Work of the Avant-Garde:

The reverberations of the May events in Paris in 1968 have led in the past few years to a fundamental change in the stance adopted by the tradition of Marxism towards the history and experience of the inter-war period artistic avant-garde. The increasing dissatisfaction with the dogmatic application of the theory of Socialist Realism has resulted in a searching reappraisal of the radical potential contained within the experience of the various movements which made up the inter-war tradition. The result has been a process of recovery, which has especially focussed upon those movements which deeply influenced the debate that took place within the Marxist tradition during this period. With hindsight we can now see the crucial significance of the four major movements of this period: Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, and the post-revolutionary avant-garde in Russis, loosely referred to as Constructivism (8). The gradual recovery of these debates has clustered around two major points raised by these movements. Firstly the radical implications of their experimentation with the traditional forms of high art, and secondly the political repurcussions which this experimentation had upon the nature of the socialist revolutionary project. In this section of the thesis I want to examine just two of these movements, Futurism and 'Constructivism'. The reasons for this are:

(i) They provide an excellent test case to see what happened to the tradition of the avant-garde in a pre/post revolutionary situation, enabling one to follow in close detail the transformations brought about in this tradition as it went 'public'.

(ii) Futurism, in its Italian form, has almost always been dismissed as an aesthetic sub-species of Fascism through its eventual post-war identi-

fication with the cause of Mussolini. This has somehow been taken to reveal the totality of its truth as an artistic movement and also by implication the truth of the whole inter-war avant-garde. However, in Russia, futurism was to come down firmly on the side of the revolution. This ambiguity of political implication should allow one to isolate the rational core of the movement and genuinely identify its radical potential. (iii) Thirdly, it will alow an interesting comparison with the artistic theory and practise which was adopted by the Nazis in Germany and which was so opposed to the tradition which had produced Futurism.

Thus the aim of the following section is to try and build up a picture of two related artistic movements (each of which displayed contradictory political tendencies) which together were able to produce a series of essential dialectical movements, culminating,in the context of revolutionary Russia,with a truly radical programme for the arts. The two movements are intimately linked because it was only with the pushing through of the 'laboratory' phase of Italian Futurism that the tradition of the avant-garde could realise its deeply radical function within Russia.

Italian Futurism:

Operating from 1909 to 1918 under the rhetorical banner of 'aesthetic modernisation', what was initially a localised, national response to a crisis in Italian culture was to become a generalised response throughout the European artistic avant-garde, which was able to articulate and clarify certain themes and problems that were surfacing throughout this tradition. The general social determinants bearing upon Italian futurism obviously coloured large areas of their demands, and the style in which they were presented. Italy was late in terms of industrialisation, and it was not until the 1890's and early 1900's that any major advances in this

direction were made. During these few years coal production, the manufacture of steel and the rate of industrial urban expansion took off, and began to impinge upon the general consciousness of the people. The localised responses present in Italian futurism, especially its strident nationalism, are clearly a function of this belated industrialisation and can adequately account for that strand in the movement which desired to see Italy take its place in the club of major industrialised nations. But when we look at its culture, then Italy was in a very different position from the rest of Europe, and it was their attack upon traditional Italian culture that enabled a localised critique to gain the status of a general artistic one. Italy's internal backwardness was most vividly illustrated by the situation of Italian art: "In Italy, art occupied a unique social position, because the country had become a museum for tourists, economically parasitic. Hence, to destroy the art of the past...presented itself as a prime political task to Marinetti." (9)

Art had become one of Italy's chief commodities, and the consumption of its past through museums, the renaissance cities, etc. was a major component of the economy. For the 'new' to emerge, this past would have to be swept away. Thus under the heading of 'modernisation', the Italian futurists embarked upon a programme of artistic experimentation, combined with a virulent social critique which was to throw its net over a much wider area than simply the aesthetic. Almost all the themes present in Italian futurism exhibit this general tendency to move from purely aesthetic concerns, through to a type of enbryonic cultural politics.

The themes of Italian futurism can be condensed down into four major concerns:

(i) The Problem of the Past:

The futurists' attmpt to settle their debts with the past manifested itself

in a seething contempt for the sclerotic cultural heritage which had become synonymous with the 'art' of Italy. This artistic disgust soon broadened out into a general contempt for the values and social formation which had been responsible for it, finally arriving at an apolcalyptic contempt for the whole spectrum of European high art, especially Romantic symbolism, so typical of much of the art of the 19th.century, (the 'slither' of romanticism' as Marinetti called it.). Only a generalised obliteration of the past, of its art, its values amd also the societies upon which these ultimately rested would allow the manifestations of the 'new' to take place. "So, let them come, the gay incendaies, with charred fingers! Here they are! Come on! Set fire to the library shelves! Turn aside the canals to flood the museums!...Oh the joy of seeing the glorious old canvasses bobbing adrift on those waters, discoloured and shredded! Take up your pick axes and hammers and wreck, wreck, wreck the veritable cities, pitilessly." (10)

Quite correctly, endless commentators have pointed out that the burner of museums was to end up as their guardian under the aegis of Mussolini; but they then hastily move on the make the assumption that statements like the one above can be safely ignored as aesthetic froth. The problem was that it was precisely such apocalyptic outbursts as these which infected and galvanised a whole generation of European artists on the eve of world war I. Marinetti's strange blend of international nationalism, was to lead him to proclaim the superiority of Futurism over other contemporary art movements in almost every major city in Europe. The result of his influential canvassing was to lead to the emergence of national versions of the Futurist demand to : "sing of the great crowds excited by work, by pleasure and by riot." (11)

Futurist equivalents appeared in France, Germany, Russia and England. He had obviously succeeded in locating a general feeling of discontent and anger.

(ii) The Programme for 'Modernisation'

Again there were certain regional elements in the Futurists' programme for aesthetic modernisation. In the context of a rapidly industrialising Italy, what they were calling for was a radical shift in the content of Italian art. A shift that would be based upon the world of factory production and the new technology, which had as its central metaphor the modern city, and a final break with an art that was based upon a rural model, taking 'nature' as its chief topic. "Living art draws its life from the surrounding environment. Our forbears drew their artistic inspiration from a religious atmosphere which fed their souls; in the same way we must breathe in the tangible miracles of contemporary life - the iron network of speedy communications which envelope the earth, the transatlantic liners, the dreadnoughts.....How can we remain insensible to the frenetic life of our great cities and the exciting new psychology of night life." (12)

Superficially this would appear to be nothing more than a re-vamped version of Madox-Brown's realist project, if it only weren't for the fact that form, as well as content, was to be thrown into the melting pot. The Futurists were among the first to realise that the structure of modern life was to call into question every aspect of the practise of European high art: "the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the beautiful." (13)

The programme of modernisation required the production of entirely new forms of expression, as the only way to achieve an adequacy with the 'heroic' quality of the new social content: "Sculpture must learn one absolute truth: to construct and try to create,now, with elements which have been stolen from the Egyptians, the Greeks or Michaelangelo, is like

trying to draw water from a dry well with a bottomless bucket." (14)

The forms of art had to be recast because it was no longer possible to operate inside the old aesthetic skin which had been outpaced by reality.

(iii) Formal Experimentation:

Space precludes a detailed exposition of the formal experimentation which the Futurists pushed forward within a bewildering variety of media. I can only indicate the general line of attack. Suffice it to say that their experimentation took place in painting, sculpture, poetry, architecture, music and the theatre, as well as other more general cultural phenomena such as food, clothing and sexual relationships. What united all these Futurist experiments was a common historical schema which linked, in a very simple, unitary manner, the general social formations of an 'age' with the more specific areas of the style and content of art-objects. This linkage was made in order to arrive at a moral judgement of the whole life of a society or civilisation.Thus, in looking at the past they were able to condemn both the art object and the sensibility which had gone towards producing it. In terms of art, both what was said, and the manner in which it was said, were to be penetrated by the modernism of the Futurists. The implication, which was certainly articulated in the later manifestoes, was that a whole new artistic sensibility was in the process of being created by the surface explorations displayed by, say, Futurist painting. In this way the arts would be able to both grasp and perceive the new reality which lay behind this push for the 'new': "To paint a human figure you must not paint it, you must render the whole of its surrounding atmosphere. Space no longer exists: the street pavement, soaked by rain beneath the glare of electric lamps, becomes immensely deep and gapes to the very centre of the earth....the sixteen people around you in a rolling motor bus are in turn and at the same time one, ten four, three; they are motionless and they change places; they come and go, bound into the street, are suddenly

swallowed up by the sunshine, then come and sit before you, like persistent symbols of universal vibration."(15)

The formal devices which they tried to incorporate in their work were the result of this new concept of reality, and were centered upon certain aims. Firstly the pervasive influence of speed (perhaps the most characteristic element of the 'new' reality conceived by the Futurists); secondly the general interpenetration of objects; thirdly simultaneity, both of events external to the spectator of the work of art and also within the emotional and spiritual life of this spectator. The result of these emphases was to devalue the art object, putting more importance on the emotional state of the artists and their audience. In fact Futurists' art objects remain surprisingly dull and awkward compared to the fury of the sentiments which lay behind them. They are in fact the remnants of a fight, the objects left behind after the battle is over.

(iv) The New Sensibility:

Behind the feverish experimentation there lay buried what, I think, is a decisive break with the whole of the aesthetic thought and practise of the 19th.century avant-garde. The most important element is the final rejection of the idea of art as simply depiction, illustration or reflection; art as something which always travels alongside reality, commenting on it, but always remaining separate and distinct. This grew out of the tendency of the Italian Futurists to see art as a form of activity, a mode of action on the world. Hence there is a movement away from the idea that it is the art object which is the most 'privileged', the most 'sacred' part of the aesthetic process. Instead, the most important element is the state of mind of the artist and his ability to impose the new sensibility upon the spectator. Thus aesthetics becomes a means of acting within the world and, more importantly, of changing it: "I now declare that lyricism is the

exquisite faculty of intoxicating oneself with life, of filling life with the inebriation of oneself. The faculty of changing into wine the muddy water of life that swirls and engulfs us." (16)

Aesthetic activity now vaults beyond the production of objects for consumption and contemplation, and becomes above all a way of life which aims at transforming the world around the artist. This Futurist sensibility rejects the values of contemplation, peace or harmony, rather it is a way of life which is posited on spontaneity, delirium and violence: "Already in the first steps of Futurism, in the mere character of its work, it is clear that its efforts were directed not so much at the creation of an artistic dogma replacing symbolism, but rather to setting the human psyche as a whole into commotion, spurring on this psyche to the maximum possible degree of creativity, elasticity, to a break with all canons and the belief in absolute values." (17)

This was the vital work done by the Futurists; the laboratory phase so important to the formation of the Constructivists' demands for a genuine revolution in the arts. The two most important results of their activity when all the rhetoric of the 'new' is cleared away were (i) The break with the idea of art as something situated in the absolute, or being of a transcendent nature. Theirs was a realism of the psychic landscape of life in modern technological capitalism. (ii) They separated aesthetic activity from the production of art-objects, thus allowing the 'aims of art' to become the object of a programme to truly socialise the arts.

The Russian Avant-Garde:

In looking back over the work of the Futurists they can be seen as part of a general tendency within the avant-garde to demystify the whole of European high-art aesthetics. The problem confronting the Futurists in Italy, after their ideological work of demolition, was to find an arena

for the practise of their creed of aesthetic activism and here they never really tackled the problem of locating the new audience. The laboratory of destruction which they had established opened up potentialities for the avant-garde in other contexts, but they themselves were always unable to capitalise on it. It needed the dimensions of political and social revolution in Russia for these potentialities to fully realise themselves.

If we return to our opening example of David, then it will be remembered that in coming to terms with his new audience, the 'people', he tried a number of radical solutions. These were:

(i) Democratisation of the institutional framework for the recruitment of artists, plus the structures for the sale and distribution of works of art.

(ii) An aggressive attack upon the culture of the past.

(iii) The organisation of mass public festivals, spectacles, plus the erection of national monuments.

(iv) The production of 'useful' objects as an alternative to 'art' objects.

(v) Radical schemes for the reorganisation of urban environments.

After the revolution of 1917, the artistic avant-garde in Russia was again to take up some of these solutions, but were to start from a position the ground-work of which had been laid down by the Italian Futurists. Prior to the revolution the Russian avant-garde had absorbed and restated two crucial concerns, working under the influence of the Italians:

Firstly there was the Russian version of the demand for the 'modernisation of aesthetics'. Like the Italians this took the form of a condemnation of the culture of the past as being inadequate to the changed nature of Russian society: "Only we are the face of our time. The horn of time is sounded by us in literary art. The past is cramped. The Academy and Pushkin are less comprehensible than hieroglyphs. Throw Pushkin, Dostoyevsky,

Tolstoy etc, etc, from the steamer of life. "(18)

Secondly they inherited the nationalistic element of Futurism in that they tried to hammer out a truly Russian style, free from imported artistic inlfuences. (Throughout the 19th.century, Russian high art, like that of Italy, had been totally colonised by the influence of France.) This search for a national style was also a search for an authentic audience. Ironically this Futurist nationalism in the period prior to the revolution produced a wave of primitivism, or rather of peasant worship. In such painters as Goncharova, Larionov and Malevitch, advance formal techniques were wedded to the depiction of authentic Russian topics. (Illustration No. 4 )

Thus immersion in the ideas of Futurism prior to the revolution had a number of important effects upon the Russian avant-garde. Firstly, the search for a fresh, authentic audience (the'real Russian people') had led the artists to concentrate on rural, peasant themes, so that even before 1918 they had begun to pose the question of what was the 'correct' audience towards which their art should be aimed. 1918 was to substitute the urban proletariat for the peasantry. Secondly it had detached a whole generation from classical Russian culture. They had to some extent settled their debt with the past even before the revolution. This had resulted in a rapid and extensive period of extreme formal experimentation, which was ripe for 'socilaisation' on the eve of the revolution. Lastly the Italian emphasis upon art as activity had struck a sympathetic nerve amongst the Russians. The revolution was to exaggerate this tension between art-object and art as activity, with the majority embracing the latter tendency as a means of generalising 'creativity' amongst the population at large.

An important result of this search for the 'people' was an increasing

love for, and awareness of, the potentialities of popular artistic forms: "Not a restriction, but an expansion of programme, a protest against formal, art-for-art's-sake because art is for the people, for the masses... Art is for the circus and the circus or for art." (19)

Popular art forms in Russia became a central model, against which the drawbacks of high art could be measured. They provided an example for the way out of artistic isolation and marginality, and gave direction to the attempt to generate a truly public and popular form for the arts in the period of revolution.

In dealing with the post-revolutionary Russian avant-garde I have tried to centre the argument in two ways. Firstly it is impossible to give full account of the plethora of personalities and movements which flourished in the years 1918-1933. Instead I have tried to pick out those tendencies which resume the themes we have been examining up to now. Secondly I have chosen those movements and personalities which illustrate the central problematic as it affected Nazi Germany, and here I have tried to select correspondences which occurred in the artistic experiences of both countries. The history of the two countries shows that they were locked into a set of similar concerns in the realms of art:

(i) What is the content and nature of socialist art; what is the content and nature of Nazi German art?

(ii) The mode in which art and politics interpenetrated each other, and an elaboration of the inverse relationship which Benjamin has pointed out, ie. Fascism renders politics aesthetic, whilst Communism responds by politicising art.

(iii) The results upon art in both countries of the logic of involvement in mass-politics, and the way in which the search for the new audience progresses, be it the 'mass', the people, the working-class, or the Volk.

A: Mass Fetes and the Theatre

The transparent structure and function of bourgeois theatre (the proscenium frame, the specialised buildings for its performances, the fourth wall opening out onto a world of illusion, the symbolic division between audience and actors in their mutual isolation from each other) made it an immediate target for some kind of radical reconstruction. After the revolution most of these characteristics of theatre were attacked in two major ways:

(i) The entry of the people into the organisation of both theatres and productions.

(ii) The reorientation of the whole institution of theatre towards festivity, ie. the attempt to realize literally the idea of 'a play'.

The first of these tendencies was largely elaborated by the director and theoretician, Meyerhold. Before the revolution he had begun to develop an idea of the theatre which was in direct opposition to that of Stanislavski, who had dominated Russian theatre up until this point. Against a theatre based on naturalism and an intensive psychologism, Meyerhold put forward ideas which stressed the theatre's anti-naturalistic, anti-psychologistic potentiality. His basic premise was that theatre had to accept the fact that it was theatre, and not some kind of naturalistic copy of the world. It had to 'lay bare its device'. He attacked the idea of the play as consisting of the gradual linear unfolding of action plot through subjective revelation. On the contrary truthful theatre consisted precisely of its 'objective' nature; an objectivity based upon 'pure' movement and external gesture, with everything bound together by elements taken from the circus and the music hall. This synthesis of purely formal elements and popular genre had been directly in line with Marinetti's demand that variety theatre should be taken seriously by high artists:

"7. The Variety Theatre offers the healthiest of all spectacles in its dynamism of form and colour (simultaneous movement of jugglers, ballerinas, gymnasts, colourful riding masters, spiral cyclones of dancers spinning on the points of their feet). In its swift, overpowering dance rhythms, Variety Theatre forcibly drags the slowest souls out of their torpor and forces them to run and jump.

8. The Variety Theatre is alone in seeking the audience's collaboration. It doesn't remain static like a stupid voyeur, but joins noisily in the action, in the singing, accompanying the orchestra, communicating with actors in surprising actions and bizarre dialogues. And the actors bicker clownishly with the musicians." (20)

The political potentialities of this type of theatre, especially given the fact that the circus was one of the most popular forms of entertainment in Russia, were quickly realised by Meyerhold. His first response was to push even further his ideas about the 'objective' content of the productions, an objectivity which he considered to be an artistic parallel to the revolutionary creation of a 'new life'. This combination of social and artistic vision drew heavily on the communal vision of the time which saw the revolution as ushering in a life that would be rational, factory based and revolving around the industrial proletariat. This was the origin of the system which he called 'bio-mechanics', which was to be the central organising concept of his new theatre: "All psychological states are determined by specific physiological processes. By correctly resolving the nature of his state physically, the actor reaches the point where he experiences the excitation which communicates itself to the spectator and induces him to share in the actor's performance...From a sequence of physical positions and situations there arise 'points of excitation' which are informed with some particular emotion. Throughout

the process of 'rousing the emotions' the actor observes a rigid framework of physical prerequisites." (21)

The first effect of the 'entry of the people' upon Meyerhold's new theatre, was derived from sharing what he considered to be the nature of the future society being constructed by the proletariat. Bio-mechanics symbolised, through the strict externality of the actors' movements, the components of the future Communist society, ie. mechanisation, rationalisation and industrialisation. At this stage the framework of the traditional theatre was held constant, only the action on the stage was 'bio-mechanised'. By 1923, however, Meyerhold had begun to take apart almost every feature of traditional theatre, especially the division which kept audience and actors in strict separation. His first experiments were organising massive, tightly choreographed displays of gymnastics: surely the most 'perfect' realisation of his theory of bio-mechanics, and perhaps the most enduring form to have emerged from the early period of the revolution.
(Illustration No. 5 )

His other approach was much less bound by his theoretical system and attempted to adapt his ideas for very specific agit-prop aims. This development was to bring out much more clearly his love of popular art-forms, especially the influence of the Russian circus. Perhaps the most audacious of his fusions of avant-garde experimentalism, popular genre and political 'work' was in his 1923 production of Sergei Tretyakov's play 'The Earth Rises'. All that remains of the production is an eye-witness account of the evening's performance: "As soon as you enter the foyer an unusual picture presents itself. The audience who wait for the beginning of the performance are not walking about deeply absorbed in talk....No. This foyer has nothing to do with the old theatre. You enter and at once must come to a halt, for the waiting public, in stiff ranks four and six

deep are marching up and down in strict military step, stamping on the ground....The stage is not divided from the auditorium and you can see everything right from the beginning....there are no wings, no decorations, no moveable scenery, nothing at all.

A military signal announces the start of the performance. At once some motor cars rush diagonally through the auditorium and over a connecting bridge onto the stage. They are followed by a company of cyclists in uniform. (There follows a riotous depiction of the revolution and civil war)....Finally, the first red flag is hoisted and is soon followed by countless others... The Communist revolution is triumphant. Fiery speeches are delivered, the 'public' strikes up the 'Internationale'." (22)

The transformation of the theatre of illusion into a form of mass participation was to produce another set of results similar to those of Meyerhold. These fetes started in 1918 and were held on a regular basis throughout Russia until about 1925-26. The theoretical basis for these festivals was almost exactly the same as that formulated by David. They were intended as a form of mass participation in which the working class could celebrate, in an unmediated fashion, the high points of its self-liberation. The chief organisers of these events, Evreinov and Annenkov, were trying to create an artistic form that would enable the separation of art/life, artist/working-class, to be transcended and create a situation in which these separations would be transcended to produce a communal fusion, a moment of socialist festivity. In all of these events the tradition of aesthetics as reflection and individual contemplation are completely obliterated in a collective celebration. Almost alone mongst the Russian avant-garde these two held on to the concept of pleasure as being central to the revolutionary project and for this they caught the anger of not only the party hacks but of their fellow artists as well. Probably their most famous event was the re-enactment of the storming of the Winter Palace,

staged first in 1919: "Machine guns crackle, rifles fire, and the artillery thunders...There is a continuous din for two or three minutes...but suddenly a rocket goes up and everything instantly becomes quiet, so that the air can be filled with new sounds. A chorus of 40,000 voices is singing the 'Internationale'. Five-pointed red stars start to light up the darkened windows of the Winter Palace. An enormous red banner is raised above the building itself...' (23) (Illustration No. 6 )

In their unorganised and chaotic nature, in their emphasis upon festivity and in the non-mediated participation they remain the perfect contrast to their Nazi counterparts, the Nuremberg rallies.

B: Malevitch and the 'end' of easel painting

Although severely criticised by his fellow artists during the period under discussion for 'residual mystical tendencies', the development of Malevitch (and also Tatlin) with his final resistence to an overhasty reduction of art into 'pure' practicality,brings out clearly the contradiction between the Utopian image of the future communist society and the specific historical conditions existing in the Russia of the time. Malevitch realised that he had to keep this dialectical tension alive; between the 'utopian' aim of his art and the project of constructing communism. He refused to collapse his work, one into the other, as many others in the avant-garde were to do.

Malevitch's painting before and after the revolution is a text book example of the process of an avant-garde artist going 'public'. Before 1918, Malevitch had absorbed and passed through the standard set of influences operating at that time. Starting with a species of derivative expressionism, he had worked through the influences of Cezanne and the French Cubists, arriving at a peasant primitivism by 1910. The remaining period before 1918 had seen a rapid movement through abstraction, with the

three basic formal components of painting; line, form, and colour, quickly becoming the 'sole' content of his work. By 1918 he had exhibited his famous 'White on White' series, which clearly marked a limit in which this type of easel-abstraction could go. During the 1918-1919 period, Malevitch abandoned painting altogether and began to construct what seemed to be three-dimensional versions of his paintings, the 'Architecktoni'. (Illustration No. 7 )

These objects occupy a place somewhere between painting and architecture; they are real 'materials occupying real space', and as such are an important stage on the way from abstract representation to practical realisation. By 1920 he had taken control of the provincial art school at Vitebsk, and had rechristened it UNOVIS (Project for the New Art). It was here that he began to elaborate his theories of Constructivism, with the development of a number of practical projects, all of which he regarded as lying beyond 'mere' painting.

The UNOVIS group, under his direction, began to formulate the theory that the 'new' geometrical forms discovered during the period of abstract painting and the Architecktoni, were to provide the basis for the reconstruction of the world along communist lines. These abstract forms would be practicalised by being made to enter life and actively participate in its reconstruction: "Let the overthrow of the old world be inscribed on the palm of your hand. Wear the black square - the sign of the world economy. Draw the red square in your studio - the sign of the world revolution in art. Clear the square of world space of the chaos residing there." (24).

Whilst this might appear as a demand for the immediate 'practicalisation' of art, of a unity of aesthetics and utility, a transcendent core was to remain which would require the realisation of a society which was

organised beyond utility: "Unovis distinguished between the concept of functionality, meaning the necessity for the creation of new forms, and the question of direct serviceableness. They represented the view that the new form is the lever which sets life in motion, if it is based on the suitability of the material and on economy.....the painter was formerly secluded from the world, so he concerned himself with compositions, that is with the combining of various factors. Nowadays...he constructs, that is he creates substance. Composition is a bunch of different flowers. Construction is the safety-razor, composed of different parts." (25)

Thus, in the philosophical system of Malevitch and Unovis the geometrical forms they developed became both lever and spring in the creation of the new order. The tension which Malevitch's vision was capable of producing can be seen in the bewildering combination within Unovis, of, on the one hand, extreme utopian projects such as Lavinsky's city built on springs and the flying towns of Krutikhov, and on the other the designing of an Unovis teapot by Malevitch. The vision remains poetic but realisable. Perhaps the most notorious of their schemes was the re-designing of the streets and houses of Vitebsk, the results of which were described suring a visit by Mayakovsky in 1920: "A strange provincial town. Like many others in the western areas - built of red-brick....but this town is especially strange. Here the main streete are covered with white paint on the red brick. And on the white background green circles have been added - orange squares - blue triangles.

"This is Vitebisk in 1920. The brush of Kasimir Malevitch has been roaming on its walls...And suddenyl again; violet ovals, black squares, yellow squares! The geometry seems the same.

But no.

For the rose circle has a violet one added below, growing out of two black

squares.

Above menacing brush strokes: A sultan.

At the side of an even grimmer stroke: A sword.

A third one: Moustache.

Two lines of a text.

A ROSTA poster!

Here the demarcation line between left and 'left' is found. The revolutionary left and the last aesthetic grimaces of the aesthetic 'left'....there: Suprematist confetti spread out on the streets of an amazed town, here: geometry as the penetrating call of a purposeful expression..."(26)

Malevitch's Suprematists' theories contained two major ideas.

(i) Firstly there is the undoubted impact of the revolution upon even the most rarified practitioner of abstract art. His work moves out of the picture-frame and off the easel, and tends towards entering into the reconstruction of life. "Art must become the content of life, since only in this way can life be beautiful."

(ii) Secondly, and running counter to this trend there was a wariness about overhastily taking up a 'destruction of art' position. He realised that to do this would leave him with no resources and no means of resisting simply becoming the aesthetic wing of the next five year plan. A red work ethic was not the equivalent of a Utopian poetics, nor its realisation as his critic Mayakovsky was tragically to discover. This was why Malevitch and the members of UNOVIS always maintained that Suprematism was the next stage for social life to progress towards after the establishment of Socialism.

C: Tatlin and Engineer Art

For many years after 1918, Tatlin was regarded by those artists of the avant-garde who supported the revolution as a kind of exemplary opposite to the work of Malevitch and UNOVIS. Like Malevitch, he too moved out from

the rarified atmosphere of formalistic experiment in painting, finally adopting a position which defined art as a set of activities which had to be practical, social and 'materialistic'. In arriving atthis position he was to lay down the major tenets of what later was to be known as 'Productivism'. However. like Malevitch, he was eventually led to reject this simplified materialisation of art in favour of a kind of romantic practicality. Tatlin, more than any other of the Russian artists (with the possible exception of Mayakovsky) worked through the contradictions contained in the term socialist art. He was to gradually shed those components inherited from Italian Futurism, such as mechanolotary, and an admiration for a kind of fantasized American urbanism, in his attempt to achieve a genuinely socialist position that would be valid within the context of Russia.

Before 1917, Tatlin's development had been influenced by two crucial events:

(i) As a traditional easel painter the impact of seeing the work of the French Cubists and the Italian Futurists;

(ii) The subversion of these purely painterly concerns by the 1918 revolution.

The first experience was to have the effect of throwing his painting style into the melting pot and was to lead him to question the limitations of purely easel-painting, ie. the frame, the content and the social situation of the art-object. The second experience was to lead him to question fundamentally the role of the painter, launching him into a radical critique which would entail the complete deconstruction of traditional painting in favour of much broader social definition of the 'artist'. In many ways he follows the same line of development that we saw in Malevitch. Under the impact of Cubism, paint and canvas are left far behind. What takes their place is a series of corner reliefs, which are completely non-figurative. They were constructed out of 'everyday' materials such as

metal, glass and wood; scraps of materials literally picked up out of the gutter. The result was again forms which seem to lie inbetween painting and architecture. This must be seen as a vital laboratory phase in Tatlin's development. In these reliefs the artist is playing with modern materials, learning their strengths and their weaknesses, trying to explore new forms which are expressions of potentialities as yet not realised by their 'masters' in the real world, the engineers and technologists.

The revolution convinced Tatlin that this laboratory type of aestheticism had to be surpassed, and that this would only be possible if the traditional role of the artist was ditched altogether. So far his penetration of the social world had only been attempted from within art, but for any palpable achievements to be realised the whole location of the aesthetic would have to be shifted and transformed. He was to sum up his development, up to this point, in the following way: "The foundation upon which our work in plastic art - our craft - rested, was not homogeneous, and every connection between painting, sculpture and architecture had been lost: the result was individualism, ie. the expression of purely personal habits and tastes.....the investigation of material, volume and construction made it possible for us in 1918, in an artistic form, to begin to combine materials like iron and glass...the results of this are models which stimulate us to inventions in our work of creating a new world, and which call upon the producers to exercise control over the forms encountered in our everyday life." (27)

At this stage, Tatlin, like many of the Russian intelligentsia, equated the image of a Communist society with the total rationalisation, and the complete mechanisation of life. They had absorbed Lenin's slogan that Socialism = soviets + electricity. Initially the realisation of this image

meant for Tatlin the adoption of an extreme utilitarianism (in the sense of utility), in which, by obeying the 'social command', the artist would become a producer like everyone else. But more especially he envisaged this kind of absorption into production as meaning that the artist would become a kind of engineer, working with materials he had chosen, but in conformity with the social need. His early formal experiments (ironically intended for only 'corners') could only enter the world if the artist himself fully became a member of that world. The implication of this for Tatlin was that he must enter the factory and take his place alongside the mass of producers. His 'art' must be based upon the principles of a revolutionised engineering and architecture, since these areas were always made up of inherently practical activities. Between 1918 and 1920 all these tendencies were fused into one single project, the monument to the Third International. This became the first 'utopian' pinnacle of Tatlin's attempt to socialise his art and make it go 'public'. The non-realisation of this project forced him to rethink his whole position; in a sense to retrace his position in order to find a less utopian pathway. Given the premises he was now workingunder, there were only really two directions in which he could move:

(i) Becoming attached to a factory in the role of a design consultant;

(ii) Moving into education as a design teacher.

He was to try both of these routes, first supervising the building of workers' clubs and their interiors (ie. the design of chairs, textiles and economical methods of heating). After this he took charge of the design section of the Petrograd Art School. It would appear that at this point Tatlin had achieved his ambition, that was, to become anonymous under the banner of utility. The contradictions within the Russian situation were not to be so easily resolved. A utopian aesthetic core of his vision

remained and was to trouble him throughout the twenties. With the advent of Stalinism and his subsequent disgrace, he seems to have completely reconsidered his whole attempt to utilitarianise, to 'abolish' it. By the middle of the 1930's he realised that the other groups who had taken up and developed his principles of Engineer art were having a great deal of difficulty locating any site for aesthetic activity under the new regime. They had been hasty in their identification of art and politics, leaving themselves at the mercy of a hostile state which had absorbed politics totally under its aegis. After the rise of Stalin, Tatlin appears to have retreated into a kind of nutty eccentricity, devoting twelve obsessive years to the perfection of Letatlin, his air-bicycle. This should be seen not simply as artistic licence, but as a response to what he saw as a one-sided resolution of the aesthetic dialectic in favour of utility. On being questioned about Letatlin he said:

Interviewer: "Tell me what this is; a work of art or a technological product?"

Tatlin: "I don't want people to take this thing purely as something utilitarian. I have made it as an artist.....Now in spring we are going out with tents and were going to start trying it out on the slopes. But, also, I really want to emphasise the aesthetic side of the thing. Now art is going out into technology." (28)

D: Productivism

The final strategy that I want to explore in this introduction is that of 'Productivism'. The Productivists never really formed a coherent group: rather they represent a general pervasive tendency which had some influence on almost every one of the avant-garde artists of this period. It is a crucial tendency because it represents the polar opposite in aesthetics of what I will be tackling in the later sections

of the thesis. Its truly radical component was that, although it lacked a sophisticated theoretical underpinning, there was through the efforts of these artists the idea that ultimately they were working towards the real abolition of the division of labour as spelt out by Marx in the 'German Ideology'. Their attempt to abolish art as a specialised class activity, and the difficulties they encountered, should be closely compared with the Nazi 'revolution' which tried to lead politics and social life to the aesthetic.

Productivism originated in Tatlin's idea that within a socialist society art must become a type of socially useful activity. The logic of this position went as follows:

(i) in bourgeois society, art and the artist are permeated with the values of that class and, in addition, are objectively in a situation which serves this class ie. individualism, plus the cult of performing a socially useless activity. They were generally agreed that there must be a qualitative break with this situation, summed up in the phrase 'the ending of easel painting'.

(ii) the basis of this bourgeois aesthetic structure is the extreme specialisation of the practise of art, with the result that it occupies a marginal position viva vis society. This again was summed up in the phrase 'the separation of art/life'.

(iii) socialist art will overcome this division and, at the same time, end the practise of art as a specialisation removed from the needs of society. To do this, art must be both socialised and politicised.

"Forward - to the overcoming of this alienation (art/life)
Forward - to the union of the artist and the factory.
And never backwards - to pure easel work, or backwards to little pictures!" (29).

Thus the basic theme of the artists of the Productivist group had two dimensions. Firstly, there was the transformation of the artist within the context of the revolution; but also what this transformation implied for the society at large, the overall trajectory of the revolution.

The deconstruction of the specialised area 'art' meant to many of the artists the abolition of the system of wage-labour and its replacement by generalised creative activity. The Productivists saw themselves not only as becoming production workers, but also as contributing a vital element to the concept of socialism ie. the reconstruction of life and the building of a new world. Thus, what before the revolution had been looked on as a cardinal sin - utility, now became the basis of all their activity: "One thing is clear: the slippery, globular belly of the bourgeoisie was a bad site for building" (30).

The Productivists gathered together in the Vhkutemas Institute in Moscow for a brief period where a number of attempts to move into 'production' were tried.

Rodchenko (abstract painter): architecture, clothing design, book lay-out.

Stepanova (painter/stage designer): worked in a factory designing textiles.

Sternberg Bros. (painters): agit-prop posters.

However, the theory of Productivism quickly encountered two types of problems:

(i) the nature of their 'audience'

(ii) the one-sided resolution of their problem in favour of utility, at the expense of the other elements we examined earlier ie. festivity and pleasure.

The Audience

The chief difficulty for most of the Productivists was the extremely abstract nature of the transformations that they imagined they were pushing through, and the 'solutions' which they set themselves. They rarely asked themselves about the nature of the new audience to which they were directing all their efforts. Nor did they ask themselves how it was possible for them to relate to the Russian working-class as it was then constituted. In many instances the working-class was nothing more than an abstract ideological category, and whilst they were very clear and precise about the displaced position of the avant-garde artist, the vital point at which contact with the real world was to be made was seen only very vaguely. The difficulties created by their naive move into the factories without adequate preparation obviously came to them as something of a shock:

> "It is true that art-work, and factory or work-shop work, are still separate. The artist is still an alien in the factory. People react suspiciously to him, they do not let him get close. They do not trust him. They cannot understand why he must know the technical processes, why he should have information of a purely industrial nature. His business is to draw, to make drawings - and it is the business of the factory to choose suitable ones from among them and stick them on ready-made manufactures." (31)

The difficulty was that the revolution had created these potentialities, these 'bridges to the future', but the steps still had to be taken. The poet Arvatov, himself a member of Lef, criticised their impatience:

> "The production-artists from 'Lef' believe that art must fuse with socio-material-life-construction, and demand this fusion immediately. Since an effective and full penetration of art into everyday life is possible only in a constituted Communist society, the production-artists are no more than Utopianists.
>
> The Utopianism of the production-artists is evident also in their rejection of depictive and decorative art, and in their dogmatic approach to constructional art ....." (32).

The persistence of these utopian elements, and the impatient desire to force them into realisation, attracts only a half-criticism by Arvatov. What he is getting at is that the final residue of aesthetic utopianism will not be dissolved until a truly communistic society has been realised, a realisation which could not be achieved simply by the voluntarism of the artists. In the face of an unyielding and embarassingly real backwardness, there was a tendency for them to revert to a kind of holier-than-thou attitude:

> "The basic idea of Production art - that the external appearance of a thing is determined by its economic purpose and not by abstract, aesthetic considerations - is still insufficiently apprehended by our industrialists, and it seems to them that the artist, in seeking to delve into the 'economic secret' of the object, is poking his nose into other people's business." (33).

## Utility versus Festivity

The tension between 'obeying the social demand' and the earlier desire 'to abolish art', was never successfully resolved, and it is difficult to see how it ever could have been in the context of Russia at that

time. Most of the artists were loathe to criticise the content of the 'social demand', with the result that it remained a nebulous, abstract notion, largely elaborated by the Productivists in isolation. They found it difficult to discard those elements which were not necessarily part of a socialist programme, such as machine worship and Taylorism. The result was that they clung to a clearly defined 'style',which they imagined was a 'pure' distillation of socialism, but which was, in fact, merely an expression of these other, non-socialist, elements. The abolition of art often got expressed simply as the erection of buildings in the International Style current throughout Europe at the time. There was an alternative route which we glimpsed earlier in the mass fetes, a route which was tentatively explored by the poet Mayakovsky during his productivist phase. Whilst he embraced completely productivist ideas about the reorganisation of art to the 'social demand', he clung onto the elements of pleasure and festivity. While working for ROSTA he produced a series of agit-prop posters which are exemplary in terms of productivist theory, but at the same time he attempted to subvert those elements which reified machinery and economic efficiency. In the early twenties Mayakovsky and Gastev moved into the factories and workshops, not as Taylorites, but as organisers of festivals in which machinery and the workplace were directed towards playful ends:

> "The first public divine service .... began with a noise orchestra composed of crowds of motors, turbines, sirens, hooters. .... The choir master stood on a balustrade and 'conducted' the din with the aid of complicated signalling apparatus. After the noise orchestra had raged .... the real passion play began .... reckless gymnastics were zealously performed .... under, in, on, between, before, and beside the various machine structures." (34)

These factory symphonies were performed in many towns during the early twenties and reached a climax, in November 1922, when the entire Caspian fleet and the factory sirens of the town of Baku were orchestrated into a massive day-long festival.

CONCLUSION

I think it would be useful at this point to try to relate the argument developed so far to the main body of the thesis. The central premise of the thesis is that, in terms of art, both post-revolutionary Russia and Nazi Germany represent a kind of developmental fork, along which progressed two different but related responses to our central problematic ie. the changes induced in the practise of the arts under the impact of mass revolutionary politics. First I wish to look at how they differ, and then to examine the connections.

Two features seem to differentiate the Russian path from that taken in Germany: the Socialist from the National Socialist. Firstly, there is the centrality of the concept 'realism' to the Russian experience, which acted as a guiding link between the artist and his audience. Although this concept appeared under a variety of disguises, alternately referred to as 'objective', 'rational', or 'obeying the social demand', it always implied a qualitative break with past aesthetic theory and practice, and a rejection of art 'as the expression of the spirit', the individual psyche, or with art seen as escapism or fantasy. (This was to hold true even during the degeneracy of the socialist tradition during the era of dogmatic Stalinism and its theory of Socialist Realism.) Unlike the Nazis, the term realism was used to denote a set of aesthetic activities that were regarded as practical, as well as being meshed into a broad spectrum of collective productive activity. Art was no longer seen as, nor intended to be, something inhabiting the realm of the absolute or the ideal, and being 'realistic' meant that it could no longer claim a transcendent position vis a vis the rest of society. The Nazi idea was, however, the complete reverse of this and demanded a 'revolutionised' art that would stress its transcendent position: more spirit, more illusion, more of the absolute was their aim.

The second big differentiating feature was in their views of history. The Russian avant-garde realised that this decisive break with the past was a possibility only because of the entry of the working-class onto the stage of history. The impact of this class upon the traditions of high art would be both searching and radical, involving not simply a shift in the content of art, but a deep transformation of every aspect of its practise. The problem for the Nazis was that they had no equivalent class on which to base their revolution. Their social category, the nationalistic Volk, could only generate a response which would strengthen traditional artistic forms, leading to the awkward position in which degenerate, archaic styles of painting were embraced as revolutionary.

Having said this, there were a number of inner connections operating in the dialectic between Nazi society and the central problematic of this thesis, connections which were operating in the dimension beyond the overt intentions of the Nazis. This was to produce some bizarre complementarities between post-revolutionary Russia and Nazi Germany. To lay bare the factors responsible for producing these complementarities, two seminal essays by Walter Benjamin have to be examined more closely: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", and "The Author as Producer". In these two essays Benjamin is trying to trace certain deep links in the area of aesthetics which connect Fascism and post-revolutionary Russia with the type of society out of which they emerged. In the first essay there is an analysis of the changes which had been occuring in the social conditions determining the situation in which art is produced. It is significant that Benjamin places all the emphasis upon how art is produced, and on the underlying changes in sense perception which support these new conditions. Such consideration

takes precedence over simplistic examination of content change. The analysis isolates two sets of determinants which, in the context of late 19th and early 20th century European capitalism, have deeply affected 'the craft of the beautiful'. First, there were the advances made within technology which made possible the elaboration of mechanical forms of reproduction - by this he means such techniques as film, radio, and printing on a mass scale. Parallel to these technological innovations there are the effects produced by the emergence of mass society (again, by this he means the arrival, in the political and social sense, of the working-class). In combination, these two sets of factors have shattered the traditional basis and form of the arts, liberating them completely from their original religio-mystical setting and stripping the art-object of the remnants of its cultic source (what Benjamin calls its 'aura'). What is important in this context is the way in which Benjamin attempts to analyse these changes in terms of the two types of society claiming to go beyond capitalism ie. socialism and fascism. The sum total of these transformative operations, performed under capitalism, is to create a situation where, within the domain of art, there exist two sets of contradictory potentialities which can develop in either a progressive or a reactionary manner, according to the type of society which eventually emerges out of capitalism in a state of crisis. The impact of technology and 'mass-politics' has had the effect of 'liberating the forms of creation from art', but it is an ambiguous liberation, allowing either (i) a true socialising of the form and function of art to occur; or (ii) a situation, the opposite of this, where the new modes of artistic creation become powerful weapons in a renewed enslavement and repression of the masses.

In the essay 'The Author as Producer', written during the ascendancy of Fascism, Benjamin attempts to explain the nature of the progressive

experiments which had taken place in post-revolutionary Russia. These new modes of artistic practise - (he has in mind the ideas of the Productivists) - are progressive not simply because of their exemplary content, but because of their formal rigour. As he says a propos the 'living newspaper' experiments and Brecht:

> "Commitment alone will not do ... The crucial point, therefore, is that a writer's production must have the character of a model: it must be able to instruct other writers in their production and, secondly, it must be able to place an improved apparatus at their disposal. This apparatus will be the better the more consumers it brings into contact with the production process - in short, the more readers and spectators it turns into collaborators!" (35).

In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' essay, he points out, towards the end of the work, that under Fascism these new techniques, and the new perceptions of reality that accompany them, are in fact fulfilling repressive ends by being encased in a set of social relationships which have not been truly revolutionised. But in both essays he makes it clear that the major spade-work in the articulation of these new techniques was accomplished by four key movements of the inter-war avant-garde, namely Futurism, Dada, Surrealism and 'Constructivism'. Together these four movements represent four different, but related, moments in an extended project to transform the arts. The crucial point is that Nazi Germany was able to latch onto the 'liberation of the forms of creation from art' and to turn them into weapons of both mass <u>expression</u> and <u>mass-repression:</u>

> "Fascism attempts to organise the newly created masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving the masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves." (36)

Thus Nazi art ends up as a peculiar mixture of elements of mass expressivity, which combine with an awkward attempt to resuscitate as 'National art forms' styles which a pre-fascist capitalism had already abandoned.

* * * * *

# C H A P T E R  II

## Nazi Art and Aesthetics

This is the major section of the thesis and consists of seven related sections:

(i) a general historical outline aimed at showing which social groups were attracted to the Nazi ideology, and why.

(ii) a closer discussion of some core concepts of this ideology, especially the way in which they bear on problems of aesthetics.

(iii) an outline of three 'major' Nazi thinkers on art ie. Hitler, Rosenberg, and Goebbels.

(iv) a discussion of certain key moments in Nazi artistic practice which illustrate our central problematic.

(v) the analysis of certain examples of architecture.

(vi) an analysis of a number of paintings.

(vii) the examination of certain types of mass expressivity within Nazi culture, and a tentative explanation of their form and function.

### Historical Periodization and its Relationship to Ideology

Any periodization of German history between the wars is still very much a matter of controversy, since discussion of the Weimar period tends to be overshadowed by, and inevitably read in terms of, the rise to power of the Nazis. Because of this the entire period has a tendency to be regarded as synonomous with the Nazi rise to power, with a decisive full-stop being inserted on the 30th January 1933 when Hindenburg made Hitler chancellor. Bearing this in mind, I feel that it is still important to attempt some kind of periodization since any examination of National Socialist ideology must take account of the fact that Nazi

tactics and ideas were deeply influenced by the wider economic and political context of Germany during the inter-war years. The schema which I wish to adopt anchors itself in the major points of economic development, with 1924 forming an axis point. The period 1918-1924 can be seen, economically and politically, as a hangover from the 1st World War. The dominating economic forces were generated by the war and by its subsequent effects upon a defeated Germany. For instance, the repatriations demanded by the Allies in the Treaty of Versailles, followed by the collapse of German heavy industry, culminated in the hyper-inflation of the winter of 1922-23. This period of economic instability was matched by a chronic political instability, with the years 1918-24 being designated 'the era of putsches'. There were attempts, by both the right and the left, to dislodge the Republic of 1918, and the violent seizure of power became the model for those on the left attempting to complete the 1918 revolution, and also for those on the right trying to reverse the constitution of 'the November criminals'. The climax of this period was the attempt, and failure, of the Nazis to overthrow the Republic in the Munich putsch of 1923. This failure led to their adoption of the parliamentary road, a strategy adopted not only by the Nazis but by the entire German right. The reorganisation of the party during and after Hitler's imprisonment was a summary of the immediate post-war experience of the N.S.D.A.P. and, at the same time, an attempt to come to terms with the changed conditions of post-1924 Weimar.

The Dawes plan of 1924 had succeeded in stabilising the German economy in the short-term, and 'the good years' of 1924-1928 were the only ones that Weimar experienced that knew anything approaching political

stability. Significantly, this was also the period of internal reorganisation, and poor election results for the Nazis. The financial crash of 1928-29 really marks the end of the Weimar Republic: the political crisis ushered in by the failure of the German economy was a period of rule by decree and cabinets, certainly not in the 'spirit' of the founders of Weimar. From 1929-33 unemployment rose from 1.3 million (in 1929) to 6.0 million (in 1933). This was the period of break-through for the National Socialists, moving from being just another right-wing sect with a membership of around 80,000 in 1927, to a party of 400,000 in 1930. This growth in membership was accompanied by a corresponding success in local government and Reichstag elections. Thus we can see the development of Nazi power as having three stages:

(i) 1919-1923, the period when they were a small militaristic sect (only marginally separated from the Freikorps bands) dedicated to the violent overthrow of the Republic;

(ii) 1924-1933. This period was marked by the adoption of 'the long road', with the aim of seizing the state and the wielding of power by parliamentary means. This period is also characterised by the subordination of all political activity to the building of a grass-roots party that would make this possible;

(iii) 1933-1939, the seizure of the state and the attempt to realise the ideology.

The adoption of this periodization means that I have set myself certain limits to the discussion of Nazi ideology. The aim is to give an outline of its major components immediately prior to their insertion into German society in 1933, and to explore their influence in the practice of the arts after the seizure of power in 1933. This has inevitably led to a certain 'take' on the problem of describing

this ideology. In no way is this a history of Nazi ideology: it is rather a description of it at a certain moment in history. Very little material, therefore, is included from the period before 1924. The bulk of the material I have used comes from the era of 'parliamentarianism', ie. 1924-1933. The examination of their practice ceases, for the most part, with the outbreak of war in 1939. This is because, in terms of the central problematic of the thesis, the type of situation that I wish to examine is one in which the realisation of a 'revolutionary' ideology is not distorted by the domination of purely military ends. In terms of Nazi Germany, the attempt to realise the image of a regenerated society (Volk) became suspended in the minds of the members of that society.

## The Approach to Nazi Ideology

In this section I wish to outline the approach I am adopting to the analysis of Nazi ideology, both in terms of what I want to do and, more importantly, what I don't want to do. Since the overall aim is to examine this ideology in relation to a set of cultural and artistic practises set in motion after 1933, there will be no attempt to present a total picture of the ideology of the N.S.D.A.P., nor will their be an attempt to give a 'total' picture of its foundation and insertion among the various class factions of German society. I do not intend to give an exhaustive analysis aimed at answering the question 'Why did the Nazis come to power?', nor a complete history of the Nazi movement. I have, therefore, opted for a schema which gives only a sketchy picture of the relationship between Nazi ideology and German social structure, but which deliberately highlights those sectors of Nazi thought which I consider most strategic to an understanding of Nazi ideas and practise in the arts. This has meant that there is little examination of, for instance, foreign policy, or of the relationship between the party and the economy.

Another problem is thrown up by the very nature of the ideology itself. After 1924 the Nazis, under the influence of Hitler, ceased to regard their social and political ideas simply as objects to be polished and refined in splendid isolation: ideology was to become a crucial political weapon rather than an academic thesis. As such its role was increasingly to become one of attracting support and mobilising individuals for the cause. The distinctive feature of the post-1924 period was the importance placed upon the role of propaganda, and the task which Hitler set the reorganised party was to transform the incoherent and contradictory ideas of the pre-1924 period into a collection of effective slogans and catch-phrases. To understand the policies adopted after 1933, one has to extract and impose upon the material a degree of coherence which never existed in 'reality'. Only in this way can one get at the interplay between ideas and the policies which were carried through. It would, however, be a mistake to imagine that one was thus constructing a 'pure' or 'ideal' picture of the Nazi universe: such an 'ideal' version never existed. What did exist, however, amongst the frantic politicking of the pre-takeover period, were a number of crucial categories which informed the way the party and its followers imagined they were moving.

As stated above, I have set a chronological horizon on 1924 for my discussion of Nazi ideology, but of course there was always an historical dimension to their ideas. The Nazi idealogues, consciously or unconsciously, imbibed deeply from the conservative thought of 19th century Germany. They shared many of the assumptions of the Volkisch and racial thinkers who are scattered throughout the intellectual history of the 19th century. Whilst being aware of this dimension, I wish to concentrate upon the specific Nazi moment. The transition from thought to the practical politics of a mass-based movement was the crucial task performed by the National Socialists. The historical dimension of their ideology will always

be refracted through the unique position of power that they alone were able to achieve among all the groupings of the German right.

A: General Outline of Nazi Ideology and some of its Determinants

> "Those who want everything to remain as it is, vote for Hindenburg. Those who want everything to change, vote for Hitler."
>
> Slogan for the Presidential Campaign, April 1932. (1)

The meaning of any ideology which is able to gain a dominant position within any society lies not only in what is said, but also in who it is said to. Who are the people who listen to the words, the phrases, the slogans, and then take them up as their own? In terms of the rise to power of the N.S.D.A.P. there are two dimensions in which the ideology operated. Firstly, there were the party members who entered the organisation during the early and middle twenties, and who went through the long haul back from failure and imprisonment to the triumph of 1933. Secondly, there were those who voted for the National Socialists in the numerous local and national elections which were such a feature of the latter part of the Weimar Republic. This difference is a crucial one, for the party's concept of the role it would play after taking power was to be rudely shattered when Hitler made a series of 'accomodations' with the army and big business after 1933. In this section I want to concentrate on looking at those parts of German society which swung massively to the Nazis in their electoral breakthroughs in 1929, and at what it was within Nazi ideology that attracted them. Only in this way can we move onto those key categories which permeated Nazi thinking on the arts, since it is highly unlikely that a political party will gain control and popular support simply on the strength of its policies in the realm of culture.

When Hindenburg declared Hitler chancellor in January 1933 , it was on the strength of his having gained 33·1% of the vote in the elections for the Reichstag in November of the previous year. The achievement of Hitler and the National Socialists in the period 1929-1933 was to unite behind themselves a highly variegated set of class factions which, together, were referred to as the 'Mittelstand'. This group was made up of those people existing in the gap between the organised working-class and the group consisting of big business, finance capitalists, and large landowners. It was a group which, until the success of the Nazis, consisted of a host of groupings,with a multitude of economic aspirations and anxieties and which had manifested itself in a number of fragmented political affiliations. Thus, the Mittelstand could be broken down into several major sub-groupings:

(i) shopkeepers, artisans, and small businessmen

(ii) the peasantry and small farmers

(iii) the salaried employees of large industrial concerns, plus the lower grades of the professions ie. the Civil Service

(iv) workers not organised into trade unions. These were usually attached to small enterprises.

Each of these sub-groups was inserted into the German economy and class structure in a specific way, and it followed that their economic interests were rarely homogenous and, in fact, were often at variance with each other. For instance, the demands of the peasantry were usually centred around the maintenance of high food prices or rather, in the period we are dealing with, around the problems created by too low prices. They sought tariffs to protect their produce from cheaper foreign imports. Against this, the more urban elements of the Mittelstand were all for lower food prices. From 1927-1929 there had been a rise in the lobbying of

pressure groups, and this had gradually become more militant (though anti-socialist). This was matched by an increasing unionisation within the professional groupings as well as among the white-collar workers (again, this was anti-socialist). Against this there was a rabid hatred of unions among the small craftsmen and traders,who bore the brunt of militant unionisation which had expressed itself in a steep rise in the cost of labour and materials.

These contradictory elements were, up until 1929, matched by a parallel lack of political cohesion. Not surprisingly, their political allegiance was distributed among a wide range of parties, with liberal, catholic and conservative organisations all gaining some of their support. What they did have in common, however, was a fear of encroachment by the two major power blocs within post-war German society - organised labour and big capital. We have, therefore, a situation in which a rejection of the working-class and its institutions was wedded to an equally incoherent anti-capitalism. Thus they rejected the institutions of free trade and the open market as the weapons of big business, which was seen as bent on destroying the small trader and the artisan.

The Depression of 1929 turned the German Mittelstand into potential fodder for Nazi ideology. The Depression did not of itself cause National Socialism, but rather created the circumstances for a 'fruitful' encounter between the groups mentioned above and the ideas being generated by the N.S.D.A.P. at that time. Unlike the 1924 crisis, that of 1929 was on an international scale. The major western capitalist countries were themselves in a bad way, and were both unwilling and unable to bail out the German economy with a second

Dawes Plan. In terms of the Mittelstand groupings, the economic crunch was to come with the failure of the banks and the subsequent drying up of capital. One must remember that the resources of these groups had been badly hit by the 1924 inflation which had largely wiped out their savings. Again, it was not the 1924 inflation that caused Nazism, as is so often claimed: it just made the 1929 Depression, when it arrived, worse for this group. The subsequent credit squeeze meant that the banks were unwilling to lend money to small enterprises, which, throughout the post-1924 period, had also been under increasing pressure from the unabated cartelisation of German big business, or, if they were willing to lend, would only do so at very high rates of interest. This lack of money after 1929 led to the emergence of an anti-capitalist outlook within these groups.

There were four major aspects of German capitalism that came under attack from the Mittelstand groups:

(i) the prevailing credit and banking system which enabled banks and wholesalers to speculate in farm products;

(ii) the methods and organisations which were associated with monopolistic types of buying, plus the pricing of commodities and materials;

(iii) capitalist markets, open and free, which created large fluctuations in the prices of the products of the small urban and rural businesses, who themselves wanted a form of controlled market;

(iv) large-scale methods of production and distribution by large modern combines which were inevitably able to

undercut the little man.

Into this situation stepped the Nazis. They were able to offer an ideology that was both anti-capitalist and anti-working class. But, above all, they were able to offer an image of a regenerated Germany in which the conflicts and anxieties of the period would be abolished and in which these two powerful blocs would be brought under control. The image they offered was the dictatorship of the Mittelstand.

The first task which the National Socialists proclaimed in their programme was to clear up the legacy of the First World War. The humiliations imposed upon a defeated Germany by the Allies in the Treaty of Versailles had to be swept away. The whole battery of the Allies' vengeance, in the form of the war reparations, the limits set on the armed forces, and the loss of the German Empire, were not only stressed as morally degrading for the German nation, but were turned into powerful explanations for the present collapse of the economy: "if the foreign powers had not 'meddled' in the internal affairs of the country, then none of this would have happened". The answer which the Nazis prescribed for Germany was to cut the country free from the whole spectrum of foreign 'influences'. The Germans would create an autarchic economic system which would be free from the long hand of 'international finance capital'. This dream of an economy that was totally self-sufficient could only be sustained among groups which were on the periphery of the central productive processes. It was this desire to rid Germany of the consequences of its defeat and its economic collapse which was to provide the basis for the idea of a distinctively 'German' solution to the country's troubles.

In addition, the Nazis were able to weld onto this strident emphasis on 'the German Way', an anti-democratic rhetoric which was derived from a few simplistic observations: Germany had been defeated by the western democracies; the politicians of democratic Weimar were the tools of these despised western powers; democracy, in the form of the 1918 Republic, had ridden to power on the back of Germany's defeat. The institution of the Reichstag was denounced as merely an arena for the confrontation of labour and capital. To the Mittelstand it had proved an increasingly ineffectual medium for the articulation of their interests and demands. What the Nazis offered was a solution to this powerlessness, a solution that would cut through the politics of 'mere parties'. In the context of Nazi ideology, the democratic system had produced nothing but a babble of conflicting voices and programmes which were incapable of transcending the sectional interests of their constituencies and operating in the interests of Germany 'as a whole'. The Nazis offered the beleaguered groups within the Mittelstand a 'third way', which appeared to be radical but which avoided, on the one hand, the 'communism' of the working-class and, on the other, an economy in which cartels and trusts were all-powerful. The Nazi party presented itself as a party of Germans and not of classes.

The economic proposals put forward by the N.S.D.A.P. were as confused and inchoate as the aspirations of the people who voted for them: "at the economic level there was something for everyone". (2) During the period 1929-1933 they became the masters of issue politics, literally leaving people to their own imaginations when it came to a detailed conception of what would constitute the proposed future society and its economy. For the peasantry they fought against the forced sale of land or farms by private bankers, promised security of

land, plus tariffs against foreign imports: yet, at the same time, they carefully deleted from their 'eternally valid' programme that section which demanded the expropriation of land without compensation. Coupled with this went promises of protection against the high interest rates charged by the banks. These specific economic proposals were interlarded with sizeable slabs of 'Blood and Soil' rhetoric, which flattered the peasant by placing him at the centre of life in the renewed Germany:

> "One can say that the blood of a people digs its roots deep into the homeland earth through its peasant land-holdings, from which it continually receives that life-endowing strength which constitutes its special character." (3)

The artisan and small businessman were offered a series of anti-capitalist measures aimed at controlling large capital and the finance houses, as well as organised labour, by proferring an image of a Germany based upon an artisan economy. The small owner was flattered by a cult of the trade: craftsmanship was glorified, and there was to be the setting up of a type of guild system in which 'courts of honour' would be established with powers to enforce a special code of practice on all trade organisations. To many this appeared to be the beginning of a new epoch in which industrialisation and its attendant ruthless competition would be eliminated once and for all. It is certainly true to say that until 1933 the Nazi leadership allowed a thousand economic fantasies to flower.

Despite its apparent contradictions, not to say blatant opportunism, the Nazi programme was able to get across to its voters one central fact: support us, and things will change drastically. This was the sense in which they were regarded as a radical party by those who supported them at the elections. However, the form this change would take

when and if they gained power was never clearly spelt out to the German electorate, but that the change, when it finally came, would sweep all before it was made very plain to the rank and file of party workers. For instance, the original electoral slogan, upon which the quote heading this section was based, ran: "Put an end to it now! Everyone vote for Hitler!". What exactly 'it' was, and what would replace 'it', depended upon the particular articulation which each class faction had with the main body of the ideology. Certain questions, crucial in any economic programme claiming for itself a radical status, were left in abeyance. The problem of profit and its social distribution among the classes was ignored until the final section of the Nazi programme, where it was dealt with in the following pregnant statement:

> "How the question of profit will be solved in the future is not under discussion here." (4)

If the small-print of the future Nazi society was left rather vague, the analysis of the present ills of German society were made horribly clear. The Jew became a common factor in all their economic analysis. Anti-semitism was the ideological cement which bound the Mittelstand to the Nazi banner. A crude distinction was made in the body of Nazi anti-capitalist ideas between German capital and Jewish capital, with the Jew being nailed as the source of the country's economic disruption:

> "The Jew ... tended to represent the forces of the market in the flesh, and those who were rightly seen as the pioneers of modern ideas and forms of culture ... were made scapegoats for the dislike of modern developments in general." (5)

For the urban petit bourgeoise, and his rural counterpart, the Jew - whether as banker, middleman for farm produce, or department-store owner - came to epitomise the agent and the immediate source

of his economic distress and political impotence. As Adorno succinctly puts it:

> "The burden of guilt is shifted from the sphere of production to the agents of circulation, or to those who provide services." (6)

Thus were sown the seeds of a racial solution to what were economic problems. Purge the race,and the economic conflicts which were at the heart of Germany's troubles would dissolve.

This then was the manure out of which the Nazi metaphysic grew. By offering the German Mittelstand a 'third way' to the solution of their problems, the Nazis allowed the fantastic dreams of a regenerated Germany to develop. From this soil sprouted "the sickly dreams of a return to artisanry and corporatism, the Ubuesque master race of blonde beasts". (7)

## The Cultural Ideology: Some Core Concepts

In the preceding account, I have deliberately omitted one group who were won over to the National Socialists in large numbers even before 1933. These were the young, or rather the middle-class young in higher education. Their organisations had been almost totally penetrated by the Nazis and Nazi ideology as early as 1930; (book burnings were taking place in the universities at least two years before the more notorious May 10th burnings of 1933). What we have examined in the previous section were the conditions which allowed the Nazis to impose a tentative political cohesion on various middle-class groups, enabling them to score some significant victories in national and local elections, for instance their gaining control of the Landtag in Thuringia by 1929. These two factors - growth in support, plus an increasing involvement in local government - meant

that they began to encounter a wide sector of the German intelligentsia, not only the young, both inside and outside the university system. It was during the period 1929-1933 that the party began to be faced with the problem of extending its ideology into areas of debate that it had so far ignored. It had to keep pace with the flood of new recruits and, at the same time, take part in the ever-widening 'battle for ideas'. The first stages of this intellectual engagement were both confused and bewildering, with the party performing a series of embarassing about-turns as the more abstract dimensions of the ideology and their political implications were worked out. The 'Great Flat-Roof Debate' will suffice to show this process at work.

Prior to 1928 the National Socialists had rarely intervened in the intensive debate that had been in progress throughout the life of the Weimar Republic concerning the role art should have in 'Modern Society'. Right-wing attacks on what was termed 'cultural bolshevism' had been largely the work of conservative individuals, operating independently of pressure groups or political organisations. In 1928 a conservative architect and art theoretician, Schultze-Naumburg, launched an attack against the Bauhaus School of Art and Architecture, and specifically singled out for criticism the frequency with which the Bauhaus style utilised the flat-roof.

> "Flat-roofs are inappropriate to the German climate and customs, and it is immediately recognisable as the child of other skies and other blood." (8)

The sloping-roof and the gable were considered to be the only 'true' form for 'the German roof'. The debate over which type of roof was suitable continued until 1928, with the rightist critics gaining support from the German Roofers Guild who thought that the spread of flat-roofs was depriving them of work. In 1928, the Nazis entered

the debate with a series of articles in the 'Völkische Beobachter' which actually praised the Bauhaus style for its 'crystal-clear functionalism'. At the same time, Rosenberg had been recruiting many of the critics of the Bauhaus style, including Schultze-Naumberg, into his Kampfbund fur Deutsche Kultur, which then renewed its attacks upon the flat-roof, the Bauhaus, and 'Neue Sachlichkeit' in the arts generally:

> "Let us be rid of skyscrapers and return to the green German soil." (9)

By 1930 the confusion had eased somewhat as the 'Völkische Beobachter' had by now come out against the Bauhaus style. The reasons for this change are interesting since it is not an indication of an increasing degree of coherence inside the ideology in respect of the arts, but is simply a piece of classic opportunist politics:

> "The Bauhaus style proletarianises 100,000's of self-sufficient building workers ... it liquidates the heart of the petit-bourgeoisie." (10)

This initial confusion and hesitancy in matters cultural (and scientific) could be illustrated with hundreds of examples. The point being made is that, having established themselves as a seemingly radical party among the German Mittelstand, this 'radicalism' had to be extended to the cultural and intellectual plane as soon as they began to penetrate and encounter the intelligentsia. If we are to understand the premises from which National Socialist 'radicalism' worked, then we must look at a number of categories which operated on a higher level of abstraction. The three categories that I have chosen as most vital for any discussion of the practice and thought of the Nazis in the area of culture are Volk, Race, and Soul.

VOLK

The category of the Volk, in Nazi thought, functioned primarily as a Utopian societal category, with its power lying in its ability to provide an image of an ideal community towards which the coming National Socialist society could aspire. The mode in which such ideal societal images operate within the ideology of a particular group has been pin-pointed by Walter Benjamin:

> "To the form of the new means of production, which to begin with is still dominated by the old (Marx), there correspond images in the collective consciousness in which the new and the old are intermingled. These images are ideals, and in them the collective seeks not only to transfigure, but also to transcend the immaturity of the social product and the deficiencies of the social order of production. In these ideal images there also emerges a vigorous aspiration to break with what is out-dated, which means, however, with the most recent past. These tendencies turn the fantasy, which gains its initial stimulus from the new, back upon the primal past. In the dream which every epoch sees in images of the epoch which is to succeed it, the latter appears coupled with elements of pre-history - that is to say, of a classless society." (11)

If we substitute the word Mittelstand for the rather vague term 'collective', then we can begin to see the power that the term 'Volk' tapped with its ability to produce an image of a transcendent, classless society for a regenerated Germany. The category of the Volk had many general features in common with other conservative European critiques of industrial capitalism. It contained the standard appeals for the population to 'return' to a more organic form of social existence, where class warfare would be abolished and where the depredations of large-scale industry and free-market forces would be held in check. In addition, there were elements which favoured the setting up of a strong caste of enlightened guardians who would be able to replace the confusion created by political parties with mere sectional interests. Thus, liberal self-interest and

individualism would give way to a form of communal vision and action. Every version of this critique drew its mythic power from a fantasised pre-industrial 'Golden Age',in terms of which it launched its attacks on industrial capitalism. This 'Golden Age' was extremely selective from the totality of each nation's historical experience, and the German version of this critique, the Volkisch myth, drew upon only a few moments in the country's history. The central element was located in the peasantry and small towns of the mediaeval period, but there were also several accretions drawn from other periods which were then fused with this central image. These additions were the myths of the 'Niebelungen' from the pre-Roman tribes (nordic), which happily combined with the inflated militarism stemming from Bismark's Reich.

This concept of the Volk was constantly deployed as a critical tool against the contemporary political institutions of Weimar and, beyond this, to their intellectual sources, the liberal democracies of Western Europe. These political systems were denigrated as the products of 'merely' rational thought, and the types of social relationships which they fostered between men were denounced as 'mechanical'. In such societies, it was claimed, men lacked depth in their social life and found themselves enslaved by a system which was completely inadequate for expressing and confirming the deep emotions which were at the heart of any 'true' society. The Volkisch way, on the other hand, was depicted as 'the German Way', a national alternative to the paths taken by the hated western democracies and, above all, to that taken by Weimar. The Volk was to provide the frame for the emergence of a real community, divorced and separate from those ephemeral institutions produced by liberal

democracy. The essence of the Volk could never be grasped rationally, since it was not simply a product of the intellect but was a reality only capable of being experienced through the 'blood' and the sheer act of living in it. Two of the most common adjectives used in talking about the Volk were 'elemental' and 'natural', the implication being that it alone was capable of giving men a deep understanding of the universe and of the natural forces which constituted this universe. It alone was capable of healing the spiritual alienation of man, which again was seen as stemming from a form of society based upon liberal individualism. The sources of this outlook in German Romanticism were clearly summarised by Thomas Mann:

> "Poetry and art - at least, Romantic poetry and German art - these embody dreams, simplicity, feeling, or, better still, 'gemutlich': they have nothing in common with 'intellect', which is very much like the Weimar Republic, to be considered a matter for Jew-boys, to be held in contempt by patriots." (12)

The logical result of liberalism would be a form of Marxism which would finally destroy the Volk and reduce men to one-dimensional economic animals. The entire identity of Man and his community was summarised in the word 'rootedness': when Man achieved true rootedness, then real freedom could begin, since the individual would be subsumed under a wider emotional community:

> "We do not conceive of the individual being as an isolated phenomenon, but ... as the healthy essence of Volkstum." (13)

The dream of a pre-industrial community was to result in a sentimental worship of the peasant as the type closest to the ideal of National Socialist man:

> "First there was a German peasantry in Germany before what is served up as German history could develop from it and, unfortunately, on its back. Neither princes, nor the church, nor the cities have created German man as such. Rather, the German man emerged from the German peasantry." (14)

This idealised peasant was the heart and soul of the Volk, displaying

sincerity, integrity, simplicity and the inevitable capacity for hard work. The term 'rootedness' reached past this picture of the hearty peasant to encompass the natural setting in which this rural idyll was to be enacted. The Volk and the landscape it inhabited were bound together in a seamless whole, which both imprinted its essence on this landscape and was, at the same time, formed by it:

> "only those closest to the soil were the most genuine human beings, since they partook of nature and the historical landscape of the Volk; only they were attached to the life of the spirit." (15)

This hardly constituted an ideology for an urban working-class, and, as we have seen, the idea of the Volk contained many powerful anti-democratic and anti-socialist elements. Its ability to appeal to the German Mittelstand and to mobilise them on the side of the Nazis lay, not only in the fact that it was rooted in the contemporary material situation of these groups, but also that it was able to transcend this material reality and, however vaguely, offer them some hope for the resolution of their present fears and anxieties. Its power lay in its <u>ideal content.</u> The Volk image not only spoke to the alienation of the intelligentsia, it was also, after the 1929 Depression, able to provide a focus for the fears of the Mittelstand by offering a societal image of an alternative way of life to the system which they identified as the source of their economic troubles. These fears, and the way in which they conceived of their being resolved, necessitated the transformation/obliteration of German big business and the alienated 'non-rooted' urban proletariat, symbolised in the way of life associated with a large modern city.

The Volk did not merely lie in the past, but was capable of projection into the future. The disruptive conflict of capital and

labour had destroyed the Volk of the past and had torn men from their organic community, flinging them together in rootless opposition inside the 'asphalt jungles' of the modern cities. This harmonising of anti-modernist themes within the wider category of the Volk is an excellent example of the way in which ideas which had previously been the property of a small right-wing sect were capable of being turned into the basis of a mass movement by the Nazis. This is Paul La Garde, an isolated conservative critic of the 19th century, describing the Germany of his day:

> "The nation is bored. Therefore individuals, through smoking, reading, theatre-going, bar-loitering, home gardening and the addiction to humour magazines, try to dispel their awareness that ciphers like themselves cannot stand being alone for any length of time." (16)

La Garde's contempt for the spiritual shallowness of his times is focused on the role played by the city. This is Hitler, writing in 'Mein Kampf' in 1924:

> "In the 19th century our cities began more and more to lose the character of cultural sites and to descend to the level of mere human settlements. The small attachment of our present big-city proletariat for the town they live in is the consequence of the fact that it is only the individual's accidental stopping-place, and nothing more. This is partly connected with the frequent change of residence caused by social conditions, which do not give a man time to form a closer bond with the city, and another cause is to be found in the general cultural insignificance and poverty of our present day cities per se." (17)

Thus the Nazis made the modern city a major factor in the social and cultural decline of Germany, since it was precisely in this arena that the two forces which symbolised the absence of the Volk, big business and the working-class, faced each other in the class war. It was self-evident in the idea of the Volk that a true community was impossible when the soil of the fatherland was cut off from a people by a layer of asphalt:

> "The Nordic Man never feels comfortable in apartment houses where the tenants live piled in layers upon one another, and where the most intimate sounds penetrate everywhere." (18)

For the intelligentsia the image of a Volkisch community was seen as a way of banishing the emptiness of modern urban existence and the peripheral nature of their own lives and ideas, whilst to the Mittelstand it meant the end of the organised labour movement and the reining in of big capital. The force of the Volk image can be seen in Leni Reifenstahl's film 'The Triumph of the Will' in which, apart from the endless motorcades, the only intrusion that the modern world makes into this Nazi spectacle is a glimpse of some factory chimneys, half-hidden in the haze above the gabled roofs of mediaeval Nuremberg.

RACE

If the concept of the Volk provided a Utopian image of a regenerated Germany, then the racial doctrines of the Nazis provided the bridge across which the population would have to cross before the promised land could be reached. The elaboration of this racial ideology, and the savagery with which it was implemented, became the distinctive German contribution to the fascist chamber of horrors. As such, they have come to occupy a central position in all the subsequent debates about the nature of National Socialism. Often this expresses itself in the formulation of a rather simplistic equation whereby the racial doctrines = anti-semitism. In the following analysis I have tried to keep the two dimensions separate, since the ideological work that each dimension performed was slightly different.

Within the Nazi ideological pantheon the racial doctrines came to occupy a similar position to that of class in the Marxist tradition. Race was raised by the Nazis to the status of 'the motor of history', a key for the complete understanding of Man's past and of his future. For the National Socialists the essence of human history was not to be found in the rise and fall of social classes as men elaborate and develop their modes of production, but rather in the rise and fall of 'racial cores', and, more specifically, in the fortunes of the Nordic/Aryan racial core in its journey through world history. If the concept of the Volk dealt with social structure, then the racial core was the agglomerate which was to be organised within this structure. The political importance of these racial doctines lay in their ability to provide a counterpoint to the mobilising power which the ideology of class-struggle had achieved among the German working-class. To achieve an ascendancy, these doctrines had to enter the market place of competing ideologies and engage those systems already in existence, of which the most important was Marxist socialism. It was in this sense that they provided the Mittelstand with a set of ideas with which to combat the theoretical weapons of the working-class. This function of German racialism has been admirably summarised by Sedgewick:

> "What has to be determined is the function of anti-semitism (and anti-Slavism) in the belief system of the National Socialist movement as a whole. For, despite the programmatic timidity and opportunism of all wings of Nazism, from Hitler to the so-called 'Left Nazis' like the Strassers, the 'Socialism' of 'National Socialism' has to be taken very seriously. All the militancy and sacrifice, all the hatred of privilege and corruption, all the determination to make a better and cleaner world, which among revolutionary socialists is attached to class perspective on society, was present among the Nazi pioneers, only linked to a racial 'vision'. Demagoguey and conscious deception were practised constantly, but within the limits of a terrible sincerity." (19)

One could also add that after 1933 this 'terrible sincerity' was not simply the property of a handful of'Nazi pioneers' but of a mass-based political movement.

Race and Culture

The Nazis, in common with all the groupings of the German right, shared a mutual heritage, that of a continuous tradition of concern with racial politics. The two primary sources for these racial doctrines were the impact of 19th century philology, and the political anthropology which accompanied Germany's aquisition of an Empire. The philological element originated in the researches by Max Müller into the origins of the Indo-European family of languages. While his specific findings on the nature of these languages were a considerable step forward for the time, he also absorbed the general sociological thought of the period, positing a concrete historico-racial grouping which was responsible for the passage of these related languages from Asia to Europe. This was the source of the Aryan myth whereby the wanderings of this imaginary group of people were traced through the cultural and social history of Europe. Alfred Rosenberg, who was completely immersed in this tradition, set out to trace and identify the various manifestations of this racially homogenous group in the civilisations of the Ancient World and in the societies of mediaeval Europe. What for Müller had been nothing more than a vague suggestion that such a racial group existed became, in the hands of Rosenberg, an empirical fact, a 'resolute racial core' and, at the same time, a peg onto which he could hang a bewildering variety of ideological suppositions. Thus, a caption in a National Socialist newspaper read:

"The race now as a thousand years ago"

while below this was a picture of a Roman face placed against that of a modern German. (20)

The Nazi racial theory of history took a great deal of trouble to eliminate the earlier diffusionist elements which had permeated the racial ideologues. Cultural traits could not be allowed to diffuse through peoples and cultures, but had to be read as the indelible print of actual racial groupings intruding into the social and cultural bodies of similarly distinct racial cores. All the cultural manifestations of a people were seen as a function of their racial composition and were, therefore, indissolubly intertwined. The reality behind the cultural products of a society was always a biological, racial grouping:

> "Long ago we had to abandon the notion of there being an homogenous origin for the myths, art, and religious forms of all peoples. On the contrary, well established evidence of saga diffusion from people to people, and the correlation of these sagas with different groups of peoples, reveals that the most basic myths have a definite point of origin." (21)

Each ensemble of myths and cultural traits is specific to a continuous and homogenous race, and will retain this distinctiveness almost regardless of the economic and political circumstances in which the racial core finds itself. Culture becomes the urgent expression of racial specificity. In his 'masterpiece', 'Der Mythus des 20 Jahrhunderts', Rosenberg set out to rewrite European history in terms of the fortunes of the Aryan/Germanic peoples and their tortuous wanderings through the pages of a totally ficitious history. The almost lunatic lengths to which he was prepared to go in order to equate what he thought was 'good' in European history with the exploits of the Aryan peoples can be judged by his comments on French history:

> "French power politics remained constant only because of the traditions of a thousand year history combined with similar geographical influences. But this was manifested in a fashion different from that which had appeared between the 14th and 16th centuries. Those in France who still thought nobly drew back from the dirty business of politics,

> lived in provincial capitals in conservative isolation, and sent their sons into the army to serve the fatherland. This was particularly so in the case of the navy. At the end of the 19th century, onlookers at naval balls made the astonishing discovery that all the officers were blonde!" (22)

Alongside this idea of the racial specificity of cultures, and particularly that of the Aryans, there was a second source of racial thinking, deriving from a type of 19th century 'Political Anthropology'. The impulse for this lay, as we have said, in the study of the physical characteristics of those various peoples who had been incorporated into the German Empire, but what in the 19th century had been a perfectly respectable interest in the species variability of Man, was rapidly transformed into a purely racial ideology. The result was that, by the end of the 19th century, it was a commonplace among right-wing sects to subscribe to one variant or another of a 'breeding' theory of history, which was almost invariably coupled with a moral hierarchy of races with the Aryan, of course, firmly at the top. (It should be noted that Mendelian genetics made hardly any impact upon Nazi racial theory.) The nation-state was seen as a biological breeding group, and the 'health' of the state and its culture depended upon the 'health' of the breeding stock. Cultures declined and nations fell because of a serious weakening or undermining of the race. This was to produce a type of 'Decline and Fall' thinking, set within a biological/racial framework. Prior to the domination of the German right by the Nazis, this biological and political anthropology tended to be both pessimistic and elitist, and the groups holding these racial ideas were resigned to an unstoppable decline in civilisation and, more particularly, in German life. The only recourse that appeared open to them was to set in motion a programme of

'regeneration', aimed at the breeding of a racially-pure elite who would take control of the state and guide the nation back onto its true course. The Nazis were to reject this pessimistic element, adopting instead an active philosophy in the face of this 'decline' of the German race. However, what they did inherit from this tradition were all the familiar catch-phrases of racial rhetoric: words such as 'mongrelisation', 'bastardisation', 'race-dilution', became common images in the Nazi analysis of the condition of Weimar Germany.

In contrast to the rather desperate gloom which settled over the German right, the Nazis were neither pessimistic nor elitist in their racial programmes. For them the 'third way', which they regarded as their special contribution to the tradition of racial thought, would require the mass application of procedures to ensure 'racial hygiene'. The full and correct application of these racial doctrines would open up the way for the realisation of the transcendent Volk and its dream of a regenerated Germany. It is not unreasonable to say that for the Nazis racial regeneration became synonomous with the 'revolution'. Although by the end of the war the 'positive' breeding policies had been only partially realised eg. through the selective matings of the S.S., the more negative aspects of the doctrine ie. the elimination of the racially impure and agents of contamination, were pursued with a vengeance.

> "There is a fearful awareness that today we stand before a final decision: either we attain, through a re-experiencing and cultivation of primal blood combined with an elevated will to struggle, a new purifying level of achievement, or even the last Germanic-Western values of civilisation and state discipline will vanish amidst filthy metropolitan crowds, crippled upon the hot barren asphalt of a bestialised humanity, or trickling away, in the form of a self-bastardising emigration, as a sickness-inducing germ, to South America, China, the Dutch Indies and Africa." (23)

Anti-Semitism

"The Jew has no culture" (24)

The image of the Jew which developed within Nazi ideology provided a negative counterpoint to the 'positive' picture contained in the concepts of the Volk and the Race. This ideology had established, in however vague a manner, a kind of 'cultural nationalism', and had underpinned it with a racial/biological base. The German nation, the German people, and German culture became woven together in a quasi-mystical unity unique to the Aryan race. The nature of these relationships, and the fact that only Aryans were capable of experiencing this 'elemental' collectivity, became the substance of the 'Germanicness' that the ideology was constantly trying to locate and define. This 'Germanicness' was being stifled and held back from realisation by the operation of non-Aryan forces within the society. International finance capital, Marxism, the alienation of modern urban life, all these had their origin in the Jew and his racially specific way of life. The problem was how to attribute such a wide variety of elements to the activities of one particular ethnic group. The solution, in terms of this particular ideological discourse, lay in the unique characteristics - racial and, therefore, also social and cultural - of the Jewish people themselves. The Jew had always been regarded by the German right as 'alien' to the mystical unity of the German race and its Volkisch community. It was considered impossible for the Jews ever to become 'truly' German, or truly anything for that matter, since they,of all men, alone lacked a homeland and therefore, in terms of the racial logic, a soul, 'kultur', or anything else that was characteristic of 'rootedness'.

> "The Jew had no feeling for a homeland, could not get such a feeling anywhere, did not yearn to do so, and therefore appeared as an eternal wanderer wherever the middleman-business or usury could prosper." (25)

He was forever a parasite upon the lives of peoples who possessed these qualities: always in an active conspiratorial relationship with these communities, attempting to subvert them and subject them to domination by the injection of alien ideas and institutions. In the Nazi cultural critique the Jew became the source of all those tendencies in modern life which had led to the 'decline' of Germany. This overall national 'decline' was responsible for the defeat of 1918, and the increasing decadence of life under the institutions of the Weimar Republic. Since the Jew lacked a soul, or rather a German soul, he was forever incapable of experiencing that deep metaphysical communion with nature and man which was so characteristic of the Aryan way of life. This lack of spirituality was complemented by a tendency for the Jew to become the purveyor of a 'shallow materialism' which could assume a multitude of historical disguises. This 'Jewish materialism' could be identified in the rationalism of the Enlightenment, right through to its most modern embodiment in Socialistic Marxism. The Jew, or his agents, was always the middleman, never the producer; he was always the rationaliser, or the prophet of enlightened liberalism or humanism. The leading edge of the various modes taken by this International Jewish Plot was the gradual domination of the nation's economy by international (Jewish) finance capital. Marxism was regarded as a second-order phenomenon invented by finance capital to infect the nation and ferment class warfare, the more to open up the country to a sneak attack:

> "The struggle of social democracy against the economic life of the nation has been only to prepare the ground for the rule of the really international and stock exchange capital." (26)

In his more immediate behaviour, the Jew was always branded as 'non-idealistic', devoted to 'mere sensuality', a decadent softie. He remained tied to the city, where he plotted the overthrow of the European nations through economic disruption and, just as importantly, through a type of cultural sabotage. It was their influence, manifesting itself through a wide range of cultural activities, that led 'good Aryans' to deny the inner promptings of their 'Nordic race-soul'. The supreme example of this was to take seriously, or worse still to practise, that most characteristic manifestation of the Jewish spirit, modern art:

> "The metropolis began its race-annihilating work. The coffee-houses of the asphalt men became studios; theoretical, bastardised dialectics became laws for ever-new directions. A race chaos of Germans, Jews, and anti-natural street races was abroad. The result was a mongrel art." (27)

> "Democratic race-corrupting precepts and the Volk-annihilating metropolis, combined with the carefully planned, decomposing activities of the Jews. The result was not only the shattering of the Weltanschaung and state thought, but also the art of the Nordic west ...." (28)

The role played by the anti-semitic elements within the general racial doctrines of the Nazis cannot be stressed sufficiently. In the area of culture the constant depiction of the 'hell' of the Jew-induced present was used to give substance to the elusive reality of the posited Volkisch paradise of the future. To the question 'How can the cultural life of Germany be regenerated?', the Nazis replied, 'By eliminating the Jew!'.

THE SOUL

One of the favourite ploys of the Nazis was to contrast the National Socialist 'revolution' with the type of revolution advocated by Marxists. The latter was invariably dismissed as a 'shallow' revolution, having only a purely materialistic content. If successful, the Marxist revolution would reduce individuals to ciphers, 'economic men', embedding them in a network of 'external' and mechanical relationships. The Nazi revolution, on the other hand, was alleged to be fundamentally concerned with the spirit, an area lying above that of economics. Hitler in his speeches constantly referred to his movement as 'a revolution of the spirit'. The stated aim of the National Socialist revolution was 'the liberation of the soul of the German people'.

The power that this idealistic component had in lining up the German middle-class behind the Nazis has been consistently underestimated, especially by those Marxist commentators of the thirties who tackled the problem of fascism (Guerin, Neumann, Brady). This was to result in an overly dismissive attitude towards the force which such an ideology could exert in a given social structure. The Nazi ideologues were repeatedly characterised as 'skilful charlatans', cynically defrauding and misleading the German people with irrational 'pie-in-the-sky' promises and second-rate mysticism. The final crushing judgement on the ideology is that it was precisely these idealistic elements that were thrown overboard on gaining power. There is, of course, a core of truth in these judgements. For instance, as early as September 1934 Hitler could say:

> "The National Socialist revolution ... as a revolutionary power process is closed." (29)

But it was only closed at the expense of a massive internal repression within the party, coupled with the Röhm purges. Nevertheless, it is perhaps only in the area of culture that the dream of a revolution of the German spirit and soul could be sustained after 1934.

> "The revolution would be an inner transformation ... it would leave the external shell intact and would change only the inner nature." (30)

Marxist analysts were again right to castigate this as amounting to the perfect bourgeois revolution, subjectivising its content and leaving the 'external' property relationships intact. But this is to ignore the dimension referred to by Sedgewick as "the terrible sincerity". Rosenberg derided the Marxism of his day as "lacking a myth" and went on to locate the success of the National Socialist movement precisely in its ability to address itself to the problem of spiritual alienation. The problem of what to do in order to restore the German soul was one with which Hitler particularly concerned himself:

> "The German collapsing into himself, divided in spirit, disunited in his purpose and thus powerless to act, becomes enfeebled in his own existence. He dreams dreams of justice in the heavens and loses ground on earth. But the more nation and reich were shattered and the safeguards of national life weakened, the more he tried at all times to turn necessity into virtue .... Ultimately, the only road remaining open to the German people was the inward road. As the nation of the bards, poets, thinkers, they dreamed of a world in which the others lived. Only after being battered unmercifully by privation and misery did there grow up the longing, perhaps out of the arts, for a renewal, for a new Reich, and thus for a new life." (31)

What a class <u>imagines</u> it is doing may be false, but this image does not therefore become simply the product of a few cynically motivated leaders.

What were the specific qualities of the German soul that was about to be transformed? It is one of the ironies of history that the Nazis would have liked to have been known as the true inheritors of German Romanticism. They saw themselves as the only political group which had managed to combine a deep grasp of the realities of modern politics with an ability to dream the dreams of the "fog-beridden" German soul. They alone had the insight and the vision, as well as the political skill and ability to make this vision a reality. The idea of 'the German soul' was to come to occupy a key position in their thinking about art. The soul was seen as the location of the eternal, of the unchanging reality which lay behind the phenomenal appearance of human history. In the Soul were to be found those absolute, ideal values which were carried through history by the race, and which found concrete and social expression in the life of the Volk. The Soul was, therefore, not simply a personal, subjective entity, but an objective communal reality where the deepest and most basic essence of a people was to be found. Participation in the 'race-soul' did not rest upon a mode of existence that was either rational or materialistic in nature (for instance, it did not rest on the summation of private economic endeavours), but was based on a profoundly mysterious and spiritual way of life. Nazi ideology set itself the task of unifying the political movement with what were seen as the urgent and irrational demands of the German Soul. Only in this way could Germany return to the source of those eternal truths which characterised the 'true' German. During the period 1933-1939 this was to take the form of nature worship and drew its inspiration from the myths of the Niebelungen. The reviving of these old rituals was seen as a way of putting the Soul back into communion with the cosmos and of

undoing the materialism imposed by the Judaic-Christian tradition. As we noted earlier, the Soul was always the property of a unique racial grouping and was only able to be truly itself by relating to the history of that race, to 'the glorious deeds of its ancestors', to the landscape inhabited by the race, and to the whole nexus denoted by "blood and soil". The restoration of 'the whole man' was always present, however distorted, in the notion of 'the revolution of the spirit'. The invocation of a myth-ridden past was the repository for these images of the whole man: its realisation, however, was conditional on the most thorough cleansing of the society:

> "The fantastic mingles with the horrible: up to the very end the crudely legendary, the grim deposit of saga in the soul of the nation, is invoked, with all the familiar echoes and reverberations." (32)

The Nazi Aesthetic

> "For if the Age of Pericles seems embodied in the Parthenon, the Bolshevistic present is embodied in a cubist monstrosity."
>
> Hitler (33)

When we come to examine the theory and practice of the Nazis in the realm of the arts, one feature stands out above all others, namely the drawing together of the political and cultural dimensions into a conscious synthesis. The overriding ambition was to weld culture into a total political Weltanschaung:

> "after the capture of the state, the National Socialist idea would link up all the cultural life with conscious political-ideological propaganda." (34)

However, if the analysis were simply to remain content with this bald statement of intent, there would be little to distinguish the

Nazi cultural project from that of post-revolutionary Russia and the other socialist regimes which have followed it. Notions of a convergence within 'totalitarian' regimes always obscure real differences between these societies, especially the direction which they envisage art and culture taking in a post-revolutionary situation. The Nazi position on art was radically different from that which was inspired by the Marxist tradition. What we are confronted with here is a radical right-wing movement whose cultural thought was 'idealist' as against the 'materialism' of the Marxist tradition. Despite numerous controversies and important differences of emphasis which have occurred within the Marxist tradition, it nevertheless contains a number of core concepts which it would be useful to highlight at this point in order to distinguish them from Nazi thought and practice.

The major part of Marxist thinking on art and culture stems from the classic paragraph in the preface to 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy':

> "In the social production of existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which arises a legal and political superstructure and which corresponds to definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life. It is not consciousness which determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness .... Changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic - in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out ...." (35)

From this basic position there follow a number of assumptions which constitute the Marxist tradition:

(i) Art is always a social activity (despite immediate appearances) and will therefore partake of the total social activity of men in the reproduction of their life. On an ideological level, art may be regarded as divorced and separate from the world it inhabits, but at a deeper level it is completely penetrated by the activities of men living in society.

(ii) Following from this, there is the notion that a culture's 'feet' are always located in the 'mud' of the economic process and are, therefore, necessarily part of the struggle between the classes for the possession of the means of production and of the social, political and ideological power which accompanies such ownership.

(iii) It is the task of the Marxist critic to bring these relationships to a conscious level.

(iv) Although the implications for artistic practice are not always so clear cut, the role of the artist , following the triumph of the doctrine of Socialist Realism, has been above all to participate on the side of the proletariat - and its institutions - in its struggles. This has usually taken the form of a demand that the artist practice a type of 'imaginative pedagogy'.

Nazi thought and practice in the arts was very different from this. Firstly, all 'true' art and culture were seen as the repository of the eternal spiritual values of man. These values, and by implication the art which contained them, were transhistorical, the property of a transcendent Soul rather than the result of the dialectical movement of social classes through history:

> "There is no such thing as a revolution in art; there is only eternal art - the Greek-Nordic art." (36)

But this transcendent nature of art did have a social aspect. The realm of the eternal values was not simply an atomistic collection of individual souls, but rather a spiritual communal soul, which was the property of the race. The eternal realm of art was the spiritual parallel of the racial unit organised in its Volkisch community, and it was through this ideological gateway that the Nazis attempted to relate art and politics. It followed that, since true art always expressed something other than the individualistic transcendence which was the most characteristic feature of art in the 'Jewish-liberalistic' democracies, it would 'plug' into,and lay bare, the eternal values of the German people as a racial community. Thus the expression of a racial view through the medium of art was opposed to the kind of art which expressed class or the private vision of an individual. Both these types of art were 'race-denying', while the aim of the Nazis was to create a situation where "blood and race will once again become the source of artistic intuition".

This is an inversion of the Marxist tradition, a reversal of the Marxist causal chain or, rather, of the hierarchy of human activity in which artistic production takes place. In the Nazi schema, the values of art descend eternal from the skies, eventually filtering downwards into the totality of men's social being. The

reconstituted society does not create new art and culture: it rediscovers that which had been lost, but which had always existed as an eternally present potential. To this central notion of the transhistorical nature of 'true art' there was grafted a moral 'take' on the cultural products of a race, which again had direct political implications. All cultural artefacts could be seen as symptomatic of the moral 'health' of a people, and could, therefore, be used to diagnose the condition of the patient's soul. In this context, words such as 'decline', 'decadence' and 'exhaustion' were favourite terms:

> "In the collapse of Germany after the war, the economic decline had been generally felt, the political decline had been denied by many, the cultural decline had not even been observed by the majority of the people." (37)

Within the Nazi cultural critique there were many embryonic forms of a social-based analysis of art: links were certainly made between the more general social life of a group, and the type and standard of its cultural activities. Artistic and cultural 'problems' were invariably read as transposed versions of problems posed by life and society. The difficulty was that the terms of the analytical equation were often highly distorted. For instance, given their idealistic premises, their analysis of the 'problem' of German art would go something like this: 'Art gets cut off from its eternal historically-transcendent source; this degeneration of art is matched by social disintegration and decline; the cause of both is the disintegration of the racial breeding unit; thus the problems of society and of art can be solved by correct breeding policies aimed at locating, and recreating, an idealistic transhistorical entity, namely the true and pure German race.' Caught in this logic, it is not surprising that all they were left with were the grisly

realities of the racial hygiene programme, whilst the Holy Grail of a renewed German art remained forever an unresolved problematic. Their distorted social and political analysis meant that they were unable to escape from that fundamental aesthetic dilemma to which we addressed ourselves in the introduction - how it is possible to unify art and politics and allow it to function within a radically new social order:

> "During the long years in which I planned the formation of a new Reich, I gave much thought to the tasks which would await us in the cultural cleansing of the people's life: there was to be a cultural renascence as well as a political and economic reform." (38)

Politics was to be allowed to enter the realm of culture, but only in order to root out, eliminate and destroy, and all in the name of a specious racial community. Culture was to be allowed into politics, but only to celebrate this specious community, a community which had never existed in fact and was unrealisable in principle.

Hitler, Goebbels and Rosenberg

> "A romanticism of steel has taken the place of a romanticism of dreams." (39)

> "The most perfect shape, the most sublime image that has recently been created in Germany has not come [out of] any artist's studio. It is the steel helmet." (40)

Despite the seeming centrality of artistic matters in the broad sweep of Nazi concerns - (Hitler, for instance, harangued the annual party rally at Nuremberg in 1935 for three hours on the importance of art in the newly emerging National Socialist state) - they were relative late-comers to the debates on culture which had been such a notable characteristic of Weimar. At first, their policies were haphazard, and very much the product of immediate

opportunistic decisions. For instance, the works of 'degenerate artists' were not removed from the walls of German museums until 1937. In this section I wish to outline the different dimensions of their aesthetic dealt with by the three most important 'thinkers' in this area, Hitler, Goebbels and Rosenberg. Each placed his emphasis upon different aesthetic problems. For Hitler the key concept was Race, and the most immediate task was the "purging of the temple of art" and the ushering in of a racially-pure, Nordic art. For Rosenberg the chief concern was the elaboration, one might almost say the discovery, of Volkisch art; while for Goebbels the only consideration was that art should serve the cause of propaganda in the struggle for the supremacy of the National Socialist weltanschaung in the minds of the German masses.

HITLER

Painting and architecture were the only two cultural areas in which Hitler personally intervened to 'clarify' and direct the line which the party was to take after 1933. His thinking on art has to be culled largely from the many speeches he made on the topic and, when taken overall, displays a strange amalgam of populist rhetoric and simplified 19th century romanticism, welded together by means of an openly racist framework. His aesthetic revolved around the two concepts of 'the Soul of the people', and the 'racial community of the Nordic/Aryan race'. This transhistorical Soul was seen as the source of all true art:

> "art is the expression of the Soul and the ideals of the community." (41)

This source renders art at one and the same time 'eternal' and race specific, a seeming contradiction that can be easily resolved if we remember that the Soul of the German people was the only one capable

of truly comprehending the infinite, and that it alone could enter "the eternal starry heaven of the infinite". In its regenerated form, German art was to be the veritable inheritor of the classical Greek tradition, the only other example of 'real' art in the history of Man. (In Nazi historiography, the Greeks were judged to be Nordic.) The problem confronting Hitler's aesthetic, and Nazi practice in general, was to specify that which was eternal and yet both German and also a manifestation of Nazi ideology. This central problematic was to cause much confusion and polemics among the N.S.D.A.P. since the Fuhrer was notoriously vague when attempting to give some concrete content to the category of the eternal. In trying to pin down more narrowly what was the German in German art, he supplied this slogan:

> "To be German is to be clear!"

The content of this Nordic Soul was to become extremely elusive in the years to come, but Hitler was in no doubt that an adequate artistic expression could be found for it somewhere. In the face of foreign criticism of the 'mediocrity' of 'German' art under the rule of the Nazis, he brushed aside any attempt to formulate an objective aesthetic based on reason:

> "it is not decisive what attitude, if any, foreign peoples take towards our works of culture, for we have no doubt that cultural creative work is the most sensitive expression of a talent conditioned by blood, and cannot be understood, far less appreciated, by individuals or races who are not of the same or related blood." (42)

As with many other areas of Nazi thought, the focus becomes distinctly sharper when discussing what is not German. It would be useful, at this point, to examine Hitler's attitude towards the avant-garde, since it is through his 'critique' of modern art that

the social dimension of his aesthetic can be most readily glimpsed. For Hitler, modern art could be easily dispensed with since it was an art hopelessly locked into a 'Jewish-liberalistic' outlook, and was by definition the expression of a decadent social structure. When he is not attacking the modern movement in Germany for being the result of a conspiracy between the Jews and liberal snobs to sap the morale of the Aryan people, he sees it as, above all, an art born of social confusion and cultural decline. He repeatedly refers to the 'babble of art-chatter' emanating from modern art practitioners, which renders their work inaccessible to the mass of the people. What seems to disturb him most is the undeniable distortion of the human form which was so characteristic of German Expressionism and such movements as Cubism. At this point Hitler appears to be genuinely puzzled by these modern works: for him it must boil down to the fact that these artists have a malfunctioning on the level of perception, in which case they can be handed over to the doctors of the Reich for treatment, or, on the other hand, the tendency towards distortion is a function of a social degeneracy (for him, a 'racial condition'), in which case they can again be brushed aside in the thrust for a German art, since they will be made irrelevant. The work of the avant-garde was seen as having gone astray because it does not aspire to 'the eternal, the beautiful and the healthy':

> "it is not the function of art to remind men of the forms taken by degeneracy." (43)

Any distortion of the 'real' world is symptomatic of a distorted soul, and therefore has no place in the Nordic universe. Behind this denigration of the form taken by modern art, there lies the belief that one of the major reasons such formalistic distortion has taken place is that art has become divorced from the lives of the mass of

the people, a condition that will eventually be resolved by the Nazi 'revolution'. It is in the focusing of his aesthetic critique upon the alienation experienced by the European cultural avant-garde that we arrive at the core of Hitler's concern, and also the point at which he becomes most ambiguous:

> "The people, when it passes through these galleries, will recognise [its own] spokesman and counsellor: it will draw a sigh of relief and express its glad agreement with this purification of art. And that is decisive: an art which cannot count on the readiest and most intimate of the great mass of the people, an art which must rely upon small cliques is intolerable .... the artist cannot stand aloof from his people." (44)

To understand this 'art-and-the-people-reconciled' aspect of Hitler's thinking, we have to retrace the arguement momentarily. We have already seen that art and culture were regarded as absolutely central to ideological matters, since it was through art that the racial soul could both express and objectify itself. The essence of this racial soul and the forms of its expression fused in a mystical collectivity:

> "art is the incorporation of the deepest, the essential force of a people." (45)

In a speech delivered before the Reichstag soon after the seizure of power (23rd March, 1933), Hitler actually attacks the 'materialists' of his own party who were demanding bread before art: this was intended as a veiled criticism of the lingering 'left' tendencies of the Propaganda Minister:

> "the less a people gives to art, the lower, in most cases, is its general standard of life." (46)

Artistic activity cannot simply be brushed aside in a theoretically constructed hierarchy of needs in which art is regarded as something which can be taken up at a later and happier time:

> "art is not something which can be summoned at need,

and at need dismissed or pensioned off." (47)

Hitler saw art as something vital at all times to the soul and spiritual life of the people. But if art was to be taken (note, not 'come') from its aesthetic and social closets and made the property of the masses, what was to be the 'revolutionary' new form this art would take? what were to be the cultural repercussions implied in the social aesthetic spelt out by Hitler? The first and primary need was the seizure of political power: only then would a regenerated German culture, in touch with the mass of the people, become a possibility. Here again we can glimpse in Hitler's thinking a half-formed, distorted notion of a cultural revolution:

> "And so today art will in the same way announce and herald that common mental attitude, that common view of life, which governs the present age." (48)

The nation will be first united under the N.S.D.A.P.; then the masses will be brought to art - and art to the masses - and they will participate in <u>their</u> culture, a regenerated German culture:

> "The artist does not create for the artist: he creates for the people and he will see to it that henceforth the people will be called in to judge its art." (49).

On the surface this would appear to be the beginnings of a radical programme for the reshaping of the arts: democratisation of access; power to determine what is produced; and, if we stretch the analysis, at least the implication of the appearance of radical new cultural forms. But here we come up against the central ambiguity in Hitler's thought, in that he manages to channel this incipient radicalism into a profoundly conservative and backward-looking vision. The 'democratisation' of the arts is simply a staging-post, a condition to be fulfilled, before the production of that old faithful of Romanticism - the 'Genius':

> "One anxious wish and one alone must therefore fill the hearts of all of us - that Providence may grant to us the great masters, who shall echo in music the emotions of the soul, who shall immortalise them in stone." (50)

The cultural revolution he appeared to promise was simply a transitional phase which, when completed, would transport Germany once again into the realms depicted by 'geniuses', that most distinctive symbol of the long tradition of 'alienated' sensuality in European culture:

> "Now is the opportunity for youth to start its industrious apprenticeship and, when a sacred conscientiousness at last comes to its own, then I doubt not that the almighty, from the mass of these decent creators of art, will once more raise up individuals to the eternal starry heaven of the imperishable God-favoured artists of the great periods." (51)

If the aim and end towards which Hitler's cultural thinking pointed was backward-looking and firmly rooted in the cliches of the 19th century, then the 'radically new' cultural forms envisaged by the Nazis were literally archaic:

> "The new age of today is at work on a new human type ... there is a new feeling of life, a new joy. Never was humanity in its eternal appearance and its frame of mind nearer to the ancient world than it is today." (52)

A Germanic Athens, peopled by blonde geniuses, would be the embodiment of Hitler's artistic vision. Compare this with Trotsky's vision of the socialist cultural revolution:

> "It is as difficult to foretell the degree of self-control to which the man of the future will attain as it is to prophesy the ultimate results of his technical capacities. The construction of society and the physiological and psychological self-education of man will be combined in one and the same process. All the arts, poetry, painting, music and architecture, will celebrate this process in marvellous ways ... Man will be infinitely stronger, wiser and more harmonious, his voice more tuneful, and his movements will be regulated by a new rythm ... the average man will rise to the level of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx, and, behind this ridge, new and loftier peaks will shine." (53)

GOEBBELS

Goebbels was very much the man of practical politics who often boasted of his sensitivity to what the masses were thinking and feeling:

> "If you put propaganda on the table the masses can eat it."

His view of art and culture could be summed up in one simple question: 'how does this work of art further the acceptance of the Nazi weltanschaung in the minds of the German people?' In his eyes culture was relevant only in terms of the ideological battle which had to accompany the successful political battle. (This does not mean that he had no personal preferences, but these were always sharply separated from general and national strategies.) For him abstract aesthetic problems did not exist or, if they did, were not worth troubling about. His earlier 'radicalism' within the party, plus a youthful flirtation with the Russian revolution, had left him with an undying admiration for Bolshevik propaganda techniques. Culture was vital in the propaganda war: everything beyond that was either a luxury or an irrelevance. Culture was politics or it was nothing.

In his speech to the Reich's Chamber of Culture in November 1937, Goebbels succinctly laid out the developmental aims of Nazi cultural policies. The first task, after taking power, was to 'cleanse' the German cultural scene of decadent influences. Jewish degenerate art had to be eliminated, not because he had a set of dogmatic ideas about an 'ideal' art which would take its place (he was notoriously liberal in his personal tastes, owning, for instance, watercolours by Nolde) but because it was an art based upon a snobbish decadence. Like

Hitler, he considered that modern art had become detached from the hopes and ideals of the German people, and no longer gave adequate expression to their feelings and desires:

> "Our enemies cry that it is impossible to expel the Jew from German cultural life: that he cannot be replaced still rings in our ears. We have done precisely this and things are proceeding better than ever. The demand of the National Socialists has been thoroughly carried out in this field and the world has visible proof that the cultural life of a people can also - and indeed meaningfully and purposefully - be administered, led and represented by its own sons." (54)

Note how in Goebbels' thinking, the racist doctrines lead almost imperceptibly to a democratic cultural nationalism: a German art for the Germans.

Once this 'cleansing' phase is over, the Nazi 'Gleichscaltung' of culture can start having its effect and begin to enter the general consciousness of the German people. However, Goebbels was never a utopian in his attitudes towards ideology: the N.S.D.A.P. Weltanschaung would bite only if it was transformed into a barrage of slogans which utilised the most modern techniques of dispersal. Although personally attracted to much that was officially designated as degenerate in German painting, he realised that the press, the newsreels and the radio were to perform the majority of this ideological work. Painting and sculpture were definitely small-fry in the battery of cultural forms that were to get the Nazi message across. He was convinced that a period of ideological construction would have to follow the period of 'cleansing', before a truly German culture could be established:

> "a host of old habits and prejudices to which many people had become fondly attached, had to be overcome through the organisation of the German creative artists in the Reich Culture Chamber." (55)

(it is ironical that at one time the K.P.D. imported one of Pavlov's assistants from Russia to run their 1932 propaganda campaign, so effectively had Goebbels learned the lessons of his Bolshevik models .)

The third stage in the development of Nazi cultural policies would be to effect a general raising in the 'average' level of the cultural life of the people. Here Goebbels was extremely astute in his appraisal of the 'meaning' that much modern German art had for the mass of the people. They were genuinely disturbed by the extreme distortion seen in so much of this painting, and found the atonalities of modern music incomprehensible. In this he was able to tap a deeply conservative root when he was to say about the artistic policies of the Nazis:

> "Never had the general public participated in the question of the plastic arts in such a lively and intimate way. That the appearance of a new creativeness was combined with the end of a period which had lain on our souls like an oppressive nightmare, was actually treated as a redemption." (56)

His notion of the democratisation of culture, and the 'lively and intimate participation' this involved, implied that he wanted to open the forms of cultural expression to all, but that these forms would remain unchanged in the process. At this point he was not greatly concerned with the 'German' in the term 'German culture', since it simply meant that the traditional forms were to be practised by as many people as possible:

> "Everywhere people are painting, building, writing poetry, singing and acting." (57)

The 'cultural revolution' was to produce a nation of weekend painters, amateur dramatic societies and works' bands. If we remove the disgusting racist content of the Nazi ideology, we are left with a type of enlightened liberal-democratic cultural policy aimed at

the enrichment of the people's leisure through grass-roots participation. The problem of the class nature of specific cultural forms has always proved to be the stumbling-block for such cultural policies and middle-class forms, parading as 'national' forms, were never dissolved in the paintings produced under the Nazis.

Goebbels, in what is obviously a bow to his Fuhrer, adds a final stage to this schema for the arts. By upping the general level of the nation's cultural life, the scene will be set for the appearance of the artistic genius:

> "In the new state, opportunities have been offered to talented people as never before. They need only reach out and make themselves masters of them." (58)

But he was to remain doubtful about the imminence of this abstract possibility, which was having some difficulty in manifesting itself:

> "there is the fact that the great philosophical ideas that have been set in motion by the National Socialist revolution operate, for the moment, so spontaneously that they are not yet ripe enough for the elaboration into artistic form." (59)

Perhaps he realised that the days of the Romantic Genius were over, and that the canvas and the slim volume of poetry would never adequately embody the Soul of the regenerated Volk even if they did have a 'mass participation'. The Volk went to the theatre to forget its troubles, and was not interested in encountering them again on the stage: they went

> "to see the lofty and the beautiful ... a world of gracious appearance ... to imagine themselves in an enchanted world of the ideal." (60)

In the end, art was again condemned to play nursemaid and comforter to a world deprived of harmony and justice.

ROSENBERG

> "The past created church and court styles; it gave us an Hellenic and Roman unity. The task of the present is to prepare a Volkisch unity."
>
> Alfred Rosenberg (61)

In my examination of Rosenberg's ideas about art, I want to set two distinct limits on the discussion. Firstly, to portray his ideas comprehensively would only be to repeat a great deal that has already been mapped out in the earlier sections. I have, therefore, restricted myself to drawing out the characteristics which are peculiar to him, and have left out the more general ideological framework he shared with the other Nazi theoreticians. Secondly, I have left until a later section on Nazi artistic practice much of the material he produced in the heated debates on the future role of art in Nazi society. In this section I want to approach his ideas from what I take to be his central problematic, namely to define what is meant by the phrase "a truly Nazi artistic style".

The most distinctive element in Rosenberg's aesthetic thinking is the continual search for, and complete failure to locate, the nature of the 'Volkisch racial unity' mentioned in the heading quotation. This difficulty also extended to the location of the cultural forms which would be its aesthetic expression. Like the other major Nazi ideologues, he held a number of common assumptions:

(i) art, at its highest points, was both spiritual and, at the same time, a manifestation of the life of the soul;

(ii) this soul was social and 'objective' in that it was the property of a specific racial community;

(iii) art was symptomatic of the soul of the people and also, therefore, of the people's biological/ racial health.

> "The naive, as well as the conscious, true artist, has always proceeded in a race constitutive manner, and he has embodied externally spiritual peculiarities through utilising those racial types that surround him, types which, in the first place, became the exceptional bearers of certain characteristics." (62)

In his search for a Volkisch aesthetic, Rosenberg adopted a species of aesthetic racism. Spiritual ideals found their highest expression objectively in the depiction of the human form, for it was precisely here that the physical ideal and the spiritual ideal fused. The construction of the image of the ideal human specimen in art is the initial step in its realisation in the racial community of the Volk. Only a people with its eyes firmly fixed on this supreme model of homo sapiens could hope to reach the final paradise:

> "Collective Europe's hero-ideal is synonomous with a tall, lean figure with shining eyes, high forehead, muscular but not muscle-bound. A hero represented as squat, broad-shouldered, bow-legged, bull-necked, and with a flattened forehead is a contradiction in terms, and this type can be found only when people like Ebert have come to the surface." (63)

The true end of Rosenberg's aesthetic goes beyond the mere representation of this physical ideal, and on to its actual production. This logical progression moves from the muscular monumentalism of the sculpture of someone like Thorak to the eugenics laboratories of the concentration camps and the legalised brothels of the S.S.

Coupled with this racist grounding of all European art went the familiar historical schema that we encountered in the earlier

sections. He sentimentalises a golden Volkisch past in which the artist and his community were at one with each other. This past cultural unity is then used to criticise the present, a present which is seen primarily as a falling away from this cultural unity: under the impact of Jewish liberalism the world is shattered, with the result that we live in an age where there is a plurality of styles but no unifying style.

> "If an age or a people no longer has a unified ideology, then it no longer has an art. Isolated artists could exist in such an age, but a style is something that results from a general direction of the soul. Therefore, we see today that we are also confronted with chaos in the field of art." (64)

The only way forward out of this chaos is the realisation of the Volkisch community. But what was the content of Rosenberg's vision? How would the new community be organised, and what would be its characteristic cultural expression? Again we move right into the heart of the problematic for Nazi ideology, not only in aesthetic matters but in a whole range of social and economic policies. Rosenberg is no clearer than his Fuhrer on the form that the new society should take. Vague, dynamic-sounding rhetoric is substituted for concrete policies:

> "However, after the destruction of the classical standard, the bastardisation of a Schoenberg, of a Kokoschka, of a Becher, triumphed over our still aimless artists, who have thrown off the old but have yet to find the true, the new. A later age will prove whether the powers of the Volk and race were strong enough to create a synthesis out of chaos." (65)

Like Goebbels, Rosenberg voices some doubts about the present in that it does not seem to 'fit' with the future he had been dreaming of during the long years in the political outback:

> "Today we have no great poets because 'we' are not yet ourselves. The World War has not brought them forth because no one has yet attained the inner realisation that he fought and died for a new Mythus ... once this is realised, the poets of the World War will be

> born. However, a new Kultur and a new art will one day also be able to develop from this new Mythus." (66)

The search for the ideal of the Volk was to continue with Rosenberg's remorseless attempts to pin down the social conditions which would allow a truly objective and public beauty to manifest itself. From 1934 onwards he was to be continually on the retreat, and was gradually ousted from any important position in aesthetic matters within the reich as the realisation of the new Kultur he had envisaged stubbornly refused to make its appearance. The resolution of art and society was to prove much more elusive than his heady outpourings prior to the seizure of power had led him to believe.

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# C H A P T E R  III

## The Period of Controversies and the Search for a Style

"Revolutionary upheaval in Germany swept into power a class of people which had previously never been noticed. People in trouble, failures and adventurers, and other young, inexperienced idealists joined together and followed the parade."

Emil Nolde (1)

"Expressionism can never serve Fascism, because Fascism seeks its ideological supports (as far as cultural heritage is concerned) in styles which antedate fully developed capitalism - in the columns of classicism (just as political reactionaries did 100 years ago),in in absolutistic and emotional Baroque styles, in the guild spirit of the old German masters."

Klaus Berger (2)

When reviewing the rise to power of the N.S.D.A.P., Hitler designated the years from 1929 to 1934 as "the days of struggle". The "struggle" which he referred to here was not only the one between the Nazis and the representatives of the Weimar political order, but was also the struggle which took place between the various factions within the party. The final form taken by Nazi society and the state was not something which had sprung, fully formed, into being on the morning of the 2nd January 1933. The eighteen months after the assumption of power was a period of ideological hiatus, with the various factions inside the party disputing, often in a violent manner, the precise meaning and scope of the Nazi revolution. While there had always been a measure of consensus about how the old order should be disposed of, the future was a much more problematic area, and perhaps in no other sphere was this more the case than that of art and aesthetics. It is for this reason that I want to use this

section of the thesis to trace in some detail the controversies which took place during these eighteen months, as they go a long way to illuminate the inherent contradictions which ran through the seemingly monolithic structure of Nazi ideology. These contradictions within the sphere of art were generated by the basic radical conservatism of the Nazi world view, in which there is both an appeal to a return to the past and yet, at the same time, the promise of a cultural revolution. This led to the search for an artistic practice (and, implicitly, an artistic style) that would both fulfil the need to look back to the past, and yet be capable of generating a 'revolutionary' artistic form. The theme of this section is, therefore, the tension which was produced by the emphasising of one or other of these terms in the aesthetic equation.

The most important question to examine in respect of these aesthetic disputes is what lay behind them? What was the dynamo which fuelled the controversies and made them escalate out of all proportion to their importance for the policies to be implemented after the Nazi seizure of power? One thing is certain: we do not have here a series of simple base/superstructure relationships. The battles were fought out on the level of ideology, but what made them important was that for a short time they provided a focus around which the discontent felt by certain sections of the movement could rally. This general feeling of unease stemmed from the confused and ambiguous nature of Nazi thinking on social and economic matters. The Röhm purges which took place in June 1934, followed by the shifts in economic policy during 1936, certainly provided limits to the directions in which a cultural reorganisation

could go. But what we are above all dealing with in the years 1929-1934 are the conflicts set up by the multiple class elements which the Nazis had managed to unite for a short while in their drive for power. The divergent interests of the German Mittelstand were never completely eradicated by the Nazis: they were simply mediated into the structure and ideology of the party. On the level of ideology, and especially around the concept of a 'German revolution', these divisions were constantly coming to the surface. They were to focus on a central problem, especially relevant to the question of culture, namely what was to constitute the 'Germanicness' of the 'German revolution'. The divisions in the party are clearly visible in two closely related debates about art:

(i) what was to constitute 'German Art'?

(ii) what was to be the role of this 'German Art' in the new Nazi society?

Some initial retracing will be necessary if we are fully to unravel the confused disputes of this period. They begin with the gathering together, around the figure of Rosenberg, of certain representatives of the conservative elements within the German intelligentsia. They quickly formed a cohesive bloc which was intended to combat in the field of culture the spokesmen for 'cultural bolshevism' who dominated the artistic debates of the Weimar period. They came together in an organisation called the 'Kampfbund fur Deutsche Kultur' and were able to achieve a dominant position within the party, assuming the role of official spokesmen for the N.S.D.A.P. on artistic matters. Ever since 1925 certain of these Kampfbund conservatives had been involved, in a debate of increasing tempo, with the architects of the 'Neue

Sachlichkeit/Bauhaus' school. Architecture, in the Weimar Republic, had become one of the most politically charged of the Fine Arts, continuing in a muted form the revolutionary upsurge which had characterised most of the arts in the immediate post-war period. Because it had been extensively commissioned by certain local governments, the Bauhaus style in architecture had come to represent the aesthetic face of the Weimar Republic. As a style it still retained many elements of its early period of radicalism, especially the notion of a unitary style of architecture capable of producing the 'new German man'. Above all else, it had become identified with the political creed of the S.P.D., which was reflected in the great emphasis laid on the development of low-cost housing through the standardisation of materials and building techniques. The conservatives challenged this style on two points:

(i) they disputed that 'Neue Sachlichkeit' had any claim to call itself a 'German' style. On this point there was a kernel of truth to the accusation. In retrospect, 'Neue Sachlichkeit' architecture has come to be seen as simply the most developed form of the 'International Style', which had emerged from the crucible of international connections which had encompassed 'De Stijl' in Holland and the Constructivist architects in Russia.

(ii) The second bone of contention was the claim made by the progressive architects that their style of building implied a 'revolution in living'. Although this element in their creed was to become increasingly

> diluted as the twenties progressed, the social ethic always remained an important part of their building philosophy. The conservatives were to take issue on these points, claiming firstly that no such 'revolution in living' had occurred, and following this up with a counter-philosophy of the social role of architecture.

In the ensuing debate the conservatives began to elaborate their counter-ideology of what was to constitute the truly 'German' architecture and, beyond this, what was to be the role of this German architecture when the nation eventually 'found itself'. Thus the conservatives had, from the outset, inherited a debate whose central component was the social function of architecture (and, by implication, of art as a whole). I have already referred to 'the great flat-roof controversy' which took place in 1926. The most important feature of this debate was that conservatives, such as Schultze-Naumburg and Emil Högg, expressly structured their arguements to incorporate sociological and cultural criticisms of what they referred to as 'industrial buildings'. These criticisms were then mediated through a nationalist and racist theory of architecture. At this point, although they were not members of the N.S.D.A.P., they were hammering out an aesthetic which, in order to combat the class-based nature of the Bauhaus, made race the major factor in the development of a national artistic style. In this they did no different to a large section of the right-wing of the German intelligentsia, and were unable to resist the embrace of Nazism as the decade drew to a close.

From 1926-1928 these artistic conservatives participated in the debate simply as individuals and, at this stage, it was still conducted in a relatively gentlemanly manner compared with what was to come later. But the increasing isolation of the right-wingers from the rich commissions being handed out during the Weimar period began to add a touch of sourness to the debate. In 1928, Schultze-Naumburg published two books which were to transform the arguement from a purely architectural issue into one covering a wide range of artistic activities. The books in question were 'Art and Race' and 'The Face of the German House'. In the first of these volumes he attempted to explain artistic 'decline' and 'decadence' in terms of a biological deterioration of the race. In a notorious passage he juxtaposed photographs of individuals suffering from an appalling range of genetic defects with reproductions of the works of mainly Expressionist painters. The implication, which was heavily drawn out, was that, so close was the resemblance between the diseased individuals and these artistic images, that the painters who produced such distorted figures must themselves be hopelessly degenerate. Both series of illustrations were indicative of a genetic disaster zone. His judgement on the artists who were capable of producing such deformations in paint was:

> "the uncreative men, formless and colourless, the half and quarter men, unbeautiful men who desire no beauty, who set their stamp upon our time." (3)

At this stage little differentiation was made by these conservative critics between the various tendencies which made up the German avant-garde. This 'blindness' to the political potential inherent in Expressionism meant that it took them by

surprise a few years later. But in 1928 there was no other opposition being voiced from the right to counter Schultze-Naumburg's aesthetic synthesis of the standard volkisch themes. The book ends with the familiar plea for the artist to help overcome this biological deterioration:

> "the artist should make visible a wish picture so that the entire Volk can strive towards beauty and attempt to resemble it". (4)

In the second volume, 'The Face of the German House', Schultze-Naumburg mobilised a number of anti-materialist, anti-urban arguements in his continuing critique of the Bauhaus style. The truly German house would always be inimicable to the life and styles of the big city: the German house, and the way of life it symbolised, could only be found in the small towns and villages of the German countryside. The Bauhaus style, on the other hand, was a product of the communist 'nomads of the metropolis'. This debate was of a high level compared to that which was taking place in many other European countries at the time. The dispute over purely aesthetic matters moved effortlessly into a discussion of the modes of life, economic and social, encapsulated in the contending architectural styles. The debate was always a dispute over the mode of life that should be instituted in Germany. Politics lay at the heart of the controversy, and little was heard of the 'autonomy of art'.

During 1928 the conservative critics began to group together into loose professional pressure groups. For instance, 'Der Block' was formed - a group of architects who had banded together to provide a counterweight to the Bauhaus modernists of 'Der Ring'.

Magazines, letters to the press, in fact all the more visible aspects of the debate, were symptomatic of its increasing importance in the cultural life of Germany. It was also during 1928 that Rosenberg began to establish contacts with these conservative architects, and it was his personal intervention which signalled the movement's shift to a more aggressive form of strategy. In 1929 Rosenberg managed to create a united front out of these organisations, combining them under the banner of the 'Kampfbund fur Deutsche Kultur' whose leading lights, apart from Rosenberg himself, were Walther Darré, an authority on agriculture and the peasantry; H.F.K. Gunther, a racist anthropologist; Professor Zeigler, a painter who was to become Hitler's favourite artist; and A. Bartels, a right-wing literary historian. Almost immediately Rosenberg was able to intergrate the Kampfbund en bloc into the structure of the N.S.D.A.P., managing to secure for it an authoritative position as part of the Nazi's increasing involvement in cultural matters. The brief for the K.D.K. was summed up in its founding decree:

> "The K.D.K. undertakes to gather together the treasures of volkisch culture and its bearers. From this reservoir the N.S.D.A.P. section of the Popular Education communicates the best to the people in the form of education." (5)

With the official recognition of the role of the Kampfbund, the party was, at least on paper, committed to the implementation of a set of policies which took in a whole range of volkisch concerns. The period from 1929-1933 was one of increasing activity for the K.D.K. From its initial start in Munich, it gradually established itself as the only visible voice on cultural matters from the right. By 1933 it regularly published a magazine, the

'Deutsche KulturWacht', and had set up an extensive regional network of 33 sub-chapters which were visited by a wide range of speakers. In 1930 a chance came to implement their cultural policies when Frick took control of the regional government of Thuringia. One of the ministries which was placed under Nazi control was that of Education, and the Kampfbund moved in to test out their theories of culture. The regime was to last for one year only, and what little the Kampfbund was able to achieve in this short time struck an ominous note for the future. Throughout the year there was little evidence of the 'positive' side of the volkisch programme, but plenty emerged from the 'negative'. The entire area was subjected to a blitz of speakers, all drawn from the K.D.K.'s lecture circuit. These speakers constantly plugged the anti-modernist line, using the twin issues of 'Jewish Culture' and 'Nigger Culture' - (jazz was considered to be an important weapon in the International Jewish Plot) - on which to hang their message. The first decree issued by the Ministry of Education was 'Against Negro Culture, for German Volkstum' (April 15th 1930). This was quickly followed by an extensive censorship of books and films. Museums were purged of their 'degenerate' paintings, and undesirable artists were dismissed from their teaching posts. Thus, by 1933, the volkisch tendency had not only succeeded in forming a cohesive bloc within the party, but had also gained valuable practical experience in Thuringia. They seemed poised for a total victory when Hitler took power in 1933, since only the volkisch aesthetic appeared to have a clearly formulated set of policies which could immediately be implemented. Their aesthetic had a number of familiar features. Firstly, the 'new German

culture' they desired would be based upon the peasant and artisan strata of society. Secondly, it would oppose, and go beyond, the over intellectualised/individualistic modes of expression characteristic of the 'townie' modernists. Thirdly, it would be an art that was grounded upon the intuitive comprehension of nature and the German soil, exalting the mystique of 'handwork' over the rationalising materialism of machine technology. Above all, it was to be a vital component of the more general Nazi revolution:

> "Around us a new Germany must rise, which can find a home in dwellings embedded in foliage , whose government buildings so longer look like factories, nor its churches like movie-houses, but instead bear the signature of the majority and the power of the people ... this evil tormenting dream must cease. And when dawn comes, then will resound the cry: 'Deutschland Erwache!" (6)

The Opposition

The first blow to the Kampfbund's dream of cultural hegemony came very shortly after the seizure of power. In March of that year Goebbels was made Minister of Propaganda and the extent of his empire, especially its incursions into territory which the K.D.K. had come to regard as its own, came as a complete surprise to them. From the very start it was clear that there were to be two bureaucratic power-bases for the control of culture. The burning problem for the Kampfbund was which one of the two would succeed in stamping its views on Nazi society. Undeterred, the Kampfbund began a purge of museums and art galleries, confident that its claim to be ushering in the new aesthetic age would be confirmed 'any day' by the personal intervention of the Fuhrer. Rosenberg had seriously overreached himself at this stage, and was to pay for it in the following year. There was an unexpected

response from a source which the K.D.K. had completely overlooked, and that was the party itself. By February-March of 1933 objections were being raised by sections of the National Socialist Students Association to the raids taking place on museums. In Berlin, articles began to appear in the press cautioning against 'premature' action and condemning the Kampfbund for its 'reactionary' and 'historicist' policies. As pointed out in an earlier section, the Nazis had met little opposition when they took over the German Students Association in 1930. The appeal of the Nazis had been strong among the "young, inexperienced idealists" of the middle-class, and it must be remembered that these student associations were just as racist in their outlook as the other party organisations. They were, however, very susceptible to the more revolutionary elements in the Nazi programme, especially those tendencies which stressed anti-capitalist strategies. The election of Goebbels in March had encouraged a group of art students in Berlin, under the leadership of Otto Andreas Schreiber, to come out into the open and overtly combat the bucolic fantasies of the Rosenberg group. In mobilising their arguements, a dispute arose between two differing aesthetics, both claiming to be 'revolutionary' and 'German'. Each put themselves forward as being the true representatives of the German people, and from an initial starting point on art, both of these groups were to finally find themselves fighting out 'the true meaning of the Nazi revolution'.

In imagining that Goebbels would be sympathetic to their cause against the Kampfbund, the radical students were not merely

indulging in wishful thinking. He was notoriously liberal in his personal artistic tastes - (paintings by Nolde and Schmidtt-Rotluff hung on the walls of his home) - and in his youth he had been closely associated with the left-faction of the Strassers. It was in the light of this history that the students were encouraged to push for a revolution in the arts which would complement the revolution that had taken place in the political sphere. Hitler's grasp on the political situation during the first months of 1933 was far from complete, and there is much evidence that these Berlin art students were mixed up in some extra-aesthetic activity. Almost as soon as Hitler had taken power, certain voices in the S.A. had begun to talk of a 'second revolution' in order to complete the anti-capitalist programme which was clearly spelt out in the 25-point party manifesto. Towards the end of February/early March, the students at the Hochschule fur Kunsterziehung in Berlin staged a sit-in. At about the same time there was an attack on the Berlin Stock Exchange, followed in June of that year by a series of violent student/young workers demonstrations, all of which were stressing the need to complete the revolution. The anti-capitalist chickens were coming home to roost, and it was almost a year before this episode was finally ended by a personal intervention on the part of Hitler. It is against this background of political discontent and ideological flexibility that the debate over art must be placed.

Schreiber was at the centre of a group of young painters who saw themselves as the inheritors of the tradition of German Expressionism. Though full-blooded Nazis, they were also hopeful of getting Expressionism installed after the takeover as 'the truly

German art'. This was not the first time that Expressionism and the German right had made contact with one another. During the 1920s the more revolutionary elements within the Youth Movement had tried to get Expressionism recognised as the 'official' art of the movement (7). The chaotic mysticism of the early Expressionists, their 'soulful agony' and their search for a transcendental reality, had strongly appealed to the volkisch mysticism which was so much a part of the Wandervogel. These latter-day Expressionists based their claim to represent German art on the contention that the vision which had been articulated by such painters as Kirchner, Schmidtt-Rotluff, Barlach and Nolde was the only truly national expression to come out of the arts in Germany in modern times. Here, they claimed, was a truly nationalistic style which was at the same time soaked in the premises of modernism. This is why so much of the debate which was to follow hinged upon the status of these Expressionist painters: were they to be seen as a genuine manifestation of the German soul, or were they simply 'decadent primitivists'?

The attack was opened by Schreiber in a series of lectures which he delivered to student meetings in the first few months of 1933. He referred to the painters supported by the K.D.K. as an "organisation of cantankerous daubers" whose archaic style was backed-up by a set of botched populist assumptions. The major thread of his arguement was that the painters regarded as exemplary by the Kampfbund were indulging in a backward-looking worship of outworn 19th century styles which could never be adequate to the expression of contemporary National Socialist reality. In a talk

given on June 29th 1933, Schreiber came out openly with his demand that the Expressionists be installed as the true representatives of National Socialist art. He ended his speech by formally dissolving Rosenberg's Kampfbund. Letters of support flooded in from all parts of Germany when his speech was made public:

> "The S.A. man's battle in the street must not be betrayed in the field of culture. Long live the complete National Socialist revolution!" (8)

Rosenberg defended the volkisch aesthetic against these onslaughts by publishing two articles in the 'Völkische Beobachter' in July (9). In the first of these reformulations of the volkisch outlook, he began from a point of agreement with the Schreiber faction, namely the primacy of the Nazi political revolution in the debate:

> "First of all, the political revolution of National Socialism is the most important step of the movement." (10)

He then pushed forward into an analysis of the artistic styles which he considered could both mirror, and be adequate to, this political revolution, attempting at the same time to counter the 'historicist' label pinned on him by the radicals:

> "We can all agree that the mendacious pseudo-Baroque of the 19th century was just as unbearable as the 'Engineer art' of today." (11)

This was a dangerous line for the leader of the Kampfbund to take since many of his volkisch colleagues had initially achieved prominence in the early part of the century with buildings which were excellent examples of this "pseudo-Baroque". The 'traditions of 1900' were a major component in the lucky-dip of styles that the K.D.K. had toyed with in its efforts to locate the true style

for the revolution. By mentioning 'Engineer Art', Rosenberg was attempting to drive a wedge into the modernist camp: he had progressed a considerable way in being able to recognise the contrast between the spiritual inclinations of Expressionism and the materialistic aesthetic embodied in the Bauhaus movement. But his attack on the paintings of the senior Expressionists showed up the deep gulf which existed between the Schreiber group and the Kampfbund. Rosenberg reverted to his 'well-defined beauty ideal' in order to prove that these Expressionists were not in touch with the Nordic spirit nor, by implication, with the German people:

> "These are not 'Mecklenburg Farmers'. Oh,no. The latter stride over the field in a completely different way to these figures of Barlach's humanity." (12)

For Rosenberg the distortion of reality was an indication of a deeper malaise. The work of Barlach, Nolde, etc., desplayed a false subjectivity: they were not 'inwardly authentic' and must, therefore, forfeit their claim to represent the German people. He then went on to lay down the basic requirements for a valid, revolutionary, German art:

> "How the German landscape is to be felt; how the heroic figure of the German warrior appears to be forged - these are the areas in which instinct and judgement of taste should test themselves. Then the outcome of this struggle will determine the form and content-world of our future." (13)

The article ended with a veiled threat to the radicals to disperse. The entire opposition to the Kampfbund was nothing more than a bunch of 'cultural Otto Strassers':

> "In the political field we have already had an Otto Strasser tendency and combatted it, as we believe, to the benefit of the movement." (14)

This was the climax of the first round of the controversy and, so far, the honours were even. The key figure in this debate was Goebbels, and he steadfastly refused to declare his hand. To the Kampfbund his propaganda empire continued to pose a threat. For the radicals his strategic position within the party, coupled with his apparent artistic liberalism, still gave them cause to hope. Probably the most illuminating aspect of the whole affair were the contradictions and shortcomings displayed by both sides in the dispute. As far as the radical tendency was concerned, the popular base they imagined they had in the country remained largely imaginary: rather they formed a convenient focal point for non-aesthetic pressure groups operating within the party. They were a group to be supported largely because of the political implications which would result from their defeat. It was totally romantic of them to suppose that, what was after all an art form based upon the most extreme form of bourgeois individualism, could immediately provide the style and form of a mass-based popular art, which seemed to be the aim envisaged for it in the statements of Schreiber. The radicals were never prepared to accept the fundamental nature of the changes implied in a true politicisation of art. Thus the content of the debate remained on an extremely crude level when assessed by the comparable debate which had taken place in Russia. What Schreiber said of the K.D.K. painters was equally applicable to his own position:

> "The Gartenlaube artist [roughly translated as 'the chocolate-box school'] and the 'literary painter' are having their great day: the former imitates nature and claims that the people understand him, and the latter paints Germanic subjects and claims that his art is volkisch." (15)

It must, however, have been quite evident that the constituency of the 'volk' was even more alienated from the distortions of the human form so characteristic of the Expressionists. The 'man-in-the-street', if he ever even went to an art gallery, would be much more likely to feel at home with the transparent realism of the Zeiglers, the Wendels and the Peiners. The search for a truly radical art, that was both popular and public, implied a much more total destruction and re-thinking of the forms of high art than either camp ever envisaged. It also required a revolution, in the sense of the transfer of power from one class to another. Unless this happened, neither side would ever be able to see the true mechanics involved in a cultural revolution. One party to the dispute was dreaming of a return to a pre-industrial age; while the other based their hopes on a sudden rapport between 'the people' and modern art, precisely that which had been conspicuously absent throughout the long nightmare of the 19th century.

The next round of the controversy was initiated, perhaps unwittingly, by a speech made by Goebbels at the opening of the Reich's Kulturkammer on November 16th, 1933. Once again it seemed to the radicals that they had the sympathy of certain highly-placed individuals. In this speech Goebbels emphasised the dominant role which 'youth' had to play in the Nazi revolution:

> "German art needs fresh blood. We live in a young era. Its supporters are young and their ideas are young. They have nothing more in common with the past which we have left behind us. The artist who seeks to give expression to this age must also be young. He must create new forms." (16)

The radicals had ignored Rosenberg's earlier threats and had stepped up their anti-Kampfbund activities. They formed a painting group, 'Der Norden', and organised exhibitions of their own work and of their Expressionist heroes. They began to publish a magazine, 'Kunst der Nation', which gained a circulation of around 3,500, mainly in the Berlin area. The combined effect of all this was to transform a somewhat academic debate about the status of certain Expressionist painters into front-page news. Rosenberg's unquestioned domination in the field of art was finally broken, and a much wider public became aware of the fact that there were two contenders for the title of 'German art'. But much more important than this was the fact that the controversy had begun to divide the complicated bureaucratic hierarchy created by the Nazis, even before it had had time to settle down. Everyone with a finger in the cultural pie began to take sides in the debate. Goebbels coopted one of the radicals, Weidemann, to help him organise the Chamber of Culture. Ley's 'Strength through Joy' organisation recruited many of the radical painters, including Schreiber, to direct one of its more fanciful 'workers' art' exhibitions. Rosenberg and the Kampfbund had to rely on the support of the 'Völkische Beobachter' which, in an editorial, accused the radicals of being:

> "A bitter and systematic resistance ... organised against the new National Socialist ideal of a spiritually healthy art anchored in the race." (17)

By February 1934, the debate seemed to be getting out of hand and became just one more of the many symptoms of disaffection which were being voiced by the party militants, especially those

within the S.A. The immediate reason for this agitation was the failure of Hitler to confirm the S.A. as the supreme military authority within the Reich. The army had become increasingly restless with the aggressive front turned on them by the S.A. whose final aim was to completely absorb the Reichswehr into its own structure and thereby create a massive People's Militia. It was for this reason that the aesthetic controversy became slotted into a much wider arguement that was gradually involving the whole of the movement ie. would the party or the State (plus the Reichswehr) hold supreme power?

In March of that year (1934) another completely unexpected development took place. An exhibition of Futurist paintings was sent to Berlin by Mussolini, complete with fraternal greetings to his fellow fascists. An event more likely to raise the temperature of the arguement could hardly be imagined. Here was an example of an overtly fascist regime not only tolerating a modern artistic movement, but actually installing it as the 'official' art of that regime. Undoubtedly the works of art which were exhibited as 'Futuristic' were only a pallid echo of the first phase of the movement: such artists as Prampolini, Ambrosi, Gitio, were scarcely recognisable as the heirs of Boccioni, Carra and St. Elia. Nevertheless, they still bore the unmistakable signs of being thoroughly 'modern'. The debate on the relative merits of these Futuristic works was to be the last chapter in the internal artistic discourse of the Third Reich.

The exhibition opened on March 28th, 1934, in Berlin, and its Italian sponsors were given the red-carpet treatment by certain

elements in the Nazi party. The German reception committee consisted of Goebbels, Goering and Rust, while the Italians had sent their top artistic representatives, Marinetti and Prof. Ruggio Vasari. The edition of the 'Völkische Beobachter' which came out on the morning of the opening attacked the exhibition, describing the objects on display as "an attempt to throw contempt on the main body of German art" (18). The paper's correspondent went on to doubt whether Futurism could in any way be considered the aesthetic face of Italian fascism. How could this be the case when fascist solidarity demanded that young German artists and their Italian counterparts be united in thought and deed? The 'entente' had to be preserved despite appearances. Unfortunately, at the same time that this editorial was being published, the members of the Italian delegation were giving interviews to the press, and going to great lengths to explain how the spirit of Futurism and the aims of Fascism were identical. Prof. Vasari in one interview claimed that only Futurism could do justice to Mussolini's slogan:

> "A new state, a new nation, can thrive only if the whole of art is revolutionised." (19)

The radicals were, of course, delighted with the exhibition, though mainly, one feels, because it gave them some support in pushing their own local 'revolutionary' ideas, rather than from any genuine appreciation of Futurism. Schreiber, while sympathetic to the aims of Futurism and its claim to be the true expression of the Italian soul, argued that only Expressionism could perform a similar role for the spirit of Germany. The authorities allowed the exhibition to remain open for fear of offending their Italian allies. Throughout the period of its being open, enthusiastic articles appeared in 'Kunst der Nation':

> "Without him Italy would be a dusty picture postcard. Marinetti and his disciples of the Manifesto are the artistic incarnations of an idea born about 1900 from the Vesuvius of Marinetti's mind and the inferno of his heart. This idea was to capture time, time as such, to seize it by the hair as it spreads over Europe's asphalt roads, polished smooth by balloon tyres ... the new continent is inhabited by airplanes, automobiles and Marinetti." (20)

In this article we are a long way from the fantasies of 'dwellings embedded in foliage' held by the volkisch members of the Kampfbund. They were outraged by the exhibition and immediately began to organise a series of nationwide counter-exhibitions to combat all such manifestations of 'cultural bolshevism'. In these exhibitions they made it quite clear that they regarded Italian Futurism as a blatant example of this cultural decadence. Given the rising cacophony of the debate, Hitler decided that he would have to intervene personally and bring the controversy to an end. Quite rightly he saw the debate over aesthetics as simply part of a wider controversy about the nature of the Nazi revolution, and if the political debate were settled, then the aesthetic one would pale into insignificance and die. On the night of June 30th he disposed of his political opponents in the S.A. In September he finally turned his attention towards artistic matters. His definitive statement on German art was delivered in his address to the annual party rally held on September 5th, 1934. In a long speech, Hitler referred directly to both sides in the dispute which had now been in session for eighteen months. First he disposed of the radicals and what he termed the 'art-chatterers':

> "The charlatans are mistaken if they think the creators of the Third Reich are foolish or cowardly enough to let themselves be befuddled or intimidated by their chatter. They will see perhaps the greatest cultural and artistic mission

> of all times go about its business, ignoring them as though they had never existed." (21)

Hitler's longstanding personal dislike of 'modernism' had triumphed over all other considerations. In this speech he made it clear that the radicals not only were to have no part in the future development of National Socialist culture, but were to be seen as a positive threat to it. However, there were some shocks in store for the Kampfbund as well:

> "Second, the National Socialist State must defend itself against the sudden emergence of those backward-lookers, who imagine that they can impose on the National Socialist revolution, as a binding heritage for the future, a 'Teutonic' art sprung from the fuzzy world of their own romantic conceptions." (22)

The mythology of the volkisch tradition was to be disposed of overnight. The mockery and scorn which Hitler poured on the volkisch thinkers drew, ironically, upon many of the arguements which the radicals had themselves used in the fight with the K.D.K. Hitler made it obvious that they too were to play no major part in the shaping of any future cultural policies. The final insult was added when he doubted that they had ever been 'true National Socialists':

> "Either they dwelt in the hermitages of a German dream world which even Jews found ridiculous, or they trotted along, pious and harmless, amid the angelic hosts of a bourgeois renaissance ... When ... after our victory ... they hurried down from the loft of their bourgeois party stable to offer their services as political minds and strategists to the National Socialist Movement ... they had no understanding of the magnitude of the upheaval that had meanwhile taken place in the German people. So today they offer us railroad stations in original German Renaissance style, street signs and typewriter keyboards with genuine Gothic letters, song texts freely imitated from Walther von der Vogelweide, fashions borrowed from Gretchen and Faust, pictures of the 'Trompeter von Sackingen' type. Perhaps they would like us to defend ourselves with shields and crossbows." (23)

What was to take the place of the Fascist Expressionism or volkisch fantasy can only be seen from the works of the artists who rose to prominence after 1935. Hitler's later statements about art are both vague and general. However, it would be wrong to assume, as many commentators have, that Nazi artistic policy becomes completely 'arbitrary' (24) or 'lacking in ideology' after this date. Choices were made about those styles which were to be favoured, as well as about those which were to be rejected. The volkisch wing may have been officially defeated but there continued to be a hangover of their ideas in the later paintings, especially of their concern to locate an artistic style that was truly German, popular and, at the same time, 'revolutionary'. The failure of such a style to manifest itself provides the major theme in the history of German painting in the years leading up to the outbreak of the war.

* * * * *

# CHAPTER IV

## The Institutional Framework of National Socialist Culture

In this section I wish to outline briefly the structure and mode of operation of the multiple bureaucratic organisations which were established after the 1933 takeover to shape and direct the cultural life of Nazi society. While the bewildering succession of bureaucracies, each with differing spheres of influence, are not directly relevant to the central problematic of the thesis, the philosophy which underlay the thrust for a total 'Gleichschaltung' of the cultural life of Germany is crucial to any analysis of the artistic output after 1933. It was the complicated bureaucratic machinery that was to be the carrier of much of the thinking on art which we examined in the earlier section, and it is in the concentrated bureaucratic embrace of the arts that the Nazi approach to culture differs most obviously from the philosophy adopted by the liberal democracies. The arbitrary dismissal of Nazi culture as 'pure propaganda' derives largely from the failure to understand this difference of outlook. In his book, 'The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism' (1), Brady characterised the classical notion of the state in liberal democracies as one which espoused an ideology of separation. Such various areas of social activity as industry, science, art and religion are seen as separate and distinct from one another and also from the area occupied by the State. In line with this outlook, the state should in theory adopt a neutral stance towards these various fields of activity, eschewing any role which entails control or

interference beyond that of a policing function. The brief of the state is to 'hold the ring' and ensure 'fair play' across these multiple competing interests. This neutral stance is reflected in each area of activity by an ideology which repels the advances made by the state. In the case of industry, there is the notion of the free-market economy; in science there is the notion of 'pure research'; in religion there is the fundamental right to freedom of worship; while the arts are dominated by the claim to the right of freedom of expression. State interference in the arts - (apart from subsidies, which are seen as upholding individual freedom) - is condemned as 'barbaric' and 'authoritarian' and as ultimately leading to the production of souless propaganda. Brady's model of the liberal state is, of course, an ideal, which has undergone considerable alteration in the era of managed capitalism: nevertheless, this type of ideology is still tenaciously clung to in the field of the arts. On the other side of the equation, the state also has a picture of itself as being neutral in respect of the arts, -(eg. in the case of England, a Labour government would not demand, as a condition of its support, allegiance to the party or the production of art with a socialist slant) - and any attempt to inject an overt political ideology becomes 'unthinkable'. Thus, within liberal democracies art is seen as being:

(i) a field of individualistic expression

(ii) a non-political activity.

The Nazi concept of the state was an almost complete inversion of this model. As we discussed earlier, the Nazis conceived of all forms of social activity as containing a political core. The

areas of human activity were not separate but were united into an organic whole through the mediation of a dominant weltanschaung. Again, this Weltanschaung was primarily a political phenomenon. Art, religion, science, in fact Kultur generally were expressions of a unified, internal, national spirit. In this schema, the state became the highest expression of this national spirit and was, therefore, morally obliged to guide and supervise the direction which this spiritual entity was to take. Thus, according to the political philosophy of National Socialism, the state was in an active relationship with the arts, duty bound to take upon itself the function of spiritual leader:

> "The writer stands shoulder to shoulder with the soldier, the labourer and the entrepreneur. He is of the people and fights within the restricted environment of his people for its existence and future. The writer is thus irrevocably committed to politics ... He is no longer the centre of a circle of faithful readers who enjoy each year his latest production at the comfort of their firesides: his place is in the arena where the whole great struggle of his people is taking place." (2)

The State became the channel for the redirection of artistic effort and, at the same time, was to act as an 'example' in the reshaping of the national soul. In order for this mediation to work, the state had to see itself as the direct expression of a united national will. No longer was it simply to be a committee discreetly operating in the background, but rather was it to become the highest expression of a united nation which had transcended the rifts created by a class-ridden social order. It is in this context that the concept of Nazi art as propaganda has to be placed, and once again we have to take note of the sincerity of the actors in order that the drama be fully comprehended.

The network of bureaucracies which surrounded the arts was constituted as follows:

(i) Goebbels' Empire, made up of

(a) the Reich Ministry of Peoples Enlightenment and Propaganda

(b) the Central Propaganda Office

(c) the Reich Chamber of Culture

(ii) Rosenberg's Institutions, which was to consist solely of the National Socialist Community of Culture. This was largely a compensatory sop which was given to Rosenberg after the controversies of 1933-1934 had settled down.

(iii) The 'Strength through Joy' section of the D.A.F., under the control of Robert Ley.

In terms of the areas of National Socialist art which I intend to examine in the following sections, only the first two have any direct relevance.

ORGANISATIONS UNDER THE CONTROL OF GOEBBELS

We have already seen that Goebbels had firmly placed all cultural activity within the realm of propaganda. Its task was to illuminate the National Socialist weltanschaung in the minds of the German masses. Propaganda in all its forms would not only keep in touch with what the public was thinking; it would also play an active role in that it would 'create' and 'mould' the consciousness of these masses by a blanket saturation of all forms of

communication. In order to achieve this:

> "the professions and institutions of literature and art had to be changed from instruments of liberal individualism to fulfilling the public functions of indoctrination and leadership." (3)

(a) THE REICH MINISTRY FOR PROPAGANDA: this organisation was set up on March 11th 1933, and was intended to be the official state organisation for the control of culture. Within the ministry a number of separate departments were established covering Film, Literature, Theatre, Music, and the Fine Arts.

(i) The Department of Fine Arts. This was to become the chief source of what the state considered to be desirable art, setting down stylistic guidelines which every painter and sculptor was bound to follow. It also led the fight, after 1934, against all manifestations of modernism in German painting, which was to culminate in its decision to burn thousands of canvases by contemporary German painters. In addition to this, it organised exhibitions throughout Germany of the work of favoured artists. The department was the chief arbiter in the search to give the category 'National Socialist painting' some kind of stylistic content.

(ii) The Department of Music. There were two principal guidelines in the brief given to this department. The first was to further the development of'Nordic' music, and this was to prove a singular failure, degenerating finally into Wagner worship and a manufactured enthusiasm for German folk-music. The range this

Nordic music was to cover was rather severely restricted to a rehashing of late-19th century Romanticism. The second aim was to enforce a total ban on the work of Jewish composers and of any who happened to display 'Jewish' characteristics eg. atonality.

(iii) The Department of Literature. The main concern of this department was the enforcing of censorship rules which covered a wide range of published material. They had absolute power to ban and destroy anything which was thought to be 'suspect' - (by this was meant that the work did not adequately embody the National Socialist Weltanschaung). Their more general brief lay in two vaguely worded decrees: (a) to provide political leadership in literature; and (b) to ensure that the broad strata of the German people were brought into contact with the achievements of German poets and writers

(iv) The Department of Theatre. Again, like the other departments, the body concerned with the theatre had both a positive and a negative aspect to its work. Above all, its task was to scrutinise productions

"from the point of view of the conformity of its spiritual content with National Socialist ideology." (4)

On the one hand it sought to encourage'Aryan' plays and playwrights, while at the same time rooting out non-Aryan plays and actors. As with the Department of Music, the search for truly Aryan plays was to prove more elusive than was at first envisaged, becoming increasingly

equated with the production of the classics.

The Reich Ministry of Propaganda was the chief ministry for implementing Nazi policies towards the arts, and was given priority over the other organisations at work in the field. The staffs of these departments were overwhelmingly made up of professional bureaucrats with few actual practitioners gaining any position of power. By and large practising artists were confined to positions inside the various Chambers of Culture, which will be described in more detail below.

(b) THE CENTRAL PROPAGANDA OFFICE: OFFICE OF CULTURE

The Office of Culture was the officially recognised body of the party in matters of internal cultural supervision. It was just one of a number of compensations which Hitler granted to the party after the purges of 1934. The elimination of the S.A. had finally established the authority of the state over the party in the matter of who was to lead Germany after the 'revolution', and autonomy in cultural matters was part of their reward for laying down their arms. Again, the basic brief of the organisation was that

> "it should stimulate artistic production on the lines of the formative expression of the National Socialist weltanschaung." (5)

The office was divided into five sections covering an extraordinary range of internal party activities:

(i) the Office of Architecture: this was responsible for laying down the official style for all the party's buildings and its many constructional projects.

(ii) the Office of Design: this was responsible for the design of a wide range of party symbols, flags

and uniforms. It was also responsible for organising many aspects of the week-long Parteitag held each year in Nuremberg.

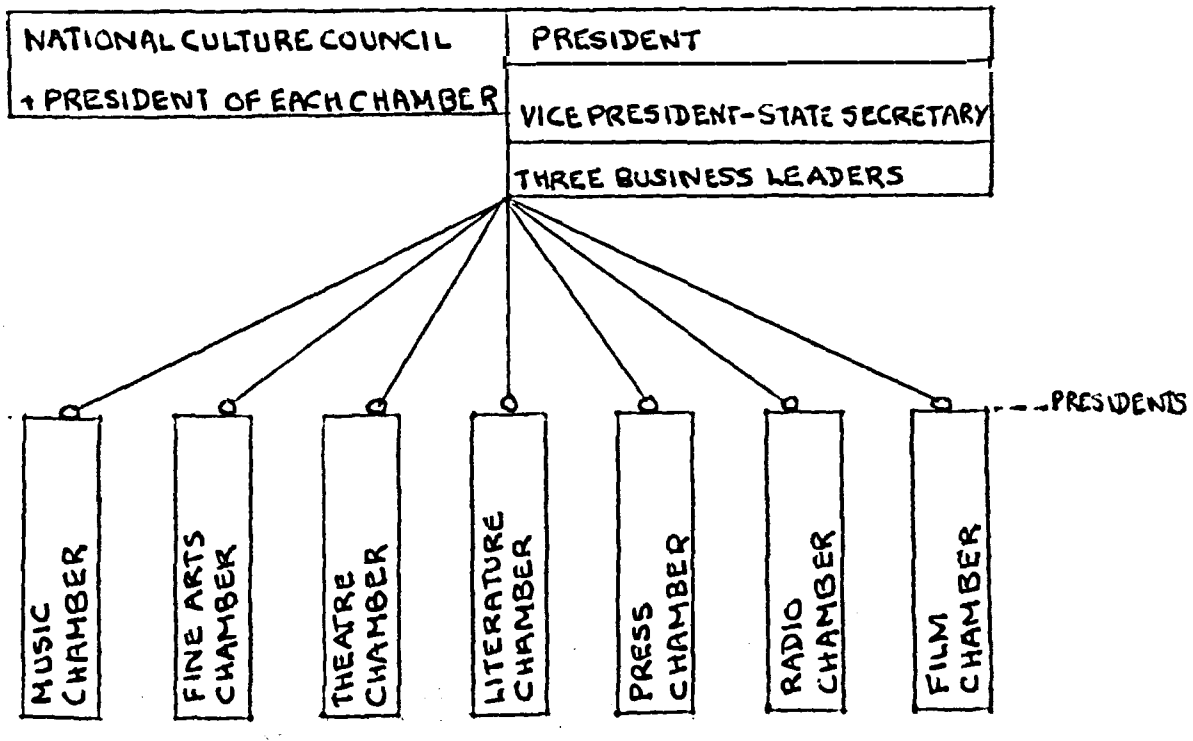
(iii & iv) these two offices were responsible for the creation and standardisation of the numerous rituals which accompanied the various stages of party membership. For instance, they devised the official christening ceremonies for the children of party members, as well as the funerals of any members who died.

(v) the Office of Folk Culture: this office became one of the last strongholds of the volkisch tendency within the party. Its brief was to encourage and spread the enjoyment of German folk art and music. On the face of it one would have expected this office to play a central role in Nazi cultural policy. However, it never really established itself and was certainly never able to raise 'folk culture' to a position of importance in any way comparable to the status given it in the Socialist regimes of eastern Europe. The reason for this lay, very largely, with Hitler's theories on the role of art. Folk forms were never to provide a focus for his grandiose schemes, and his architectural projects were always thoroughly urban both in their function and in their style. The dominant source was to be a type of baroque monumentalism rather than rural volkischness.

(c) THE REICHS CHAMBER OF CULTURE. The various departments which made up the Reichs Chamber of Culture were set up with the passing of the Reichskulturkammergesetz of September 22nd, 1933. The decrees that were to govern its everyday running, and which were to determine its overall function, were passed in the months that followed, with the whole apparatus beginning to function effectively by November of that year. The decree passed on the 1st November set out most succinctly the basic principles which were to cover the workings of all the various chambers:

> "The Chamber of Culture has the assignment ... the cooperation of all involved in its various fields of activity and under the direction of the Minister of Information and Propaganda, of furthering German culture with responsibility towards the people and the Reich; of regulating the economic and social aspects of cultural affairs; and of balancing all activities of its member groups." (6)

The structure of the Chamber of Culture can best be summaraised by a diagram:



Each of the chambers, when they eventually began to be fully operational, constituted the only institution through which any kind of artistic activity could take place. They literally encompassed every aspect of each particular art form, to such an extent that failure to gain membership of the respective chamber meant a complete ban on the artist in question being able to work at all - (this applied even to working in private). The chambers were not state unions, rather state-imposed corporation-guilds, and were designed to include everyone who was associated, however remotely, with any cultural form:

> "Anyone who takes part in the production, the reproduction, the artistic or technical elaboration, the publication, the presentation, the wholesale or retail selling, of cultural goods [Kulturguter] must be a member of the chamber which is relevant to his activities." (7)

Thus, for instance, membership of the Reich Chamber of Radio was compulsory not only for producers and broadcasters, but also for the manufacturers and retailers of radio sets.

This grouping together of the nation's cultural activities into state organisations was not simply the working out of an abstract totalitarian urge. The Chambers were there to support and further a particular view of art which was best summed up by K.F. Schreiber, President of the Council for the National Chamber of Culture in 1936:

> "The base underlying the three laws can be brought into a simple formula: within the unity of creative function (i) primacy of the spiritual; (ii) suppression of the economic; (iii) subjection to the laws of the people's community through filling the cultural professions with a definite sense of responsiblity to the nation." (8)

This 'simple formula' combined the three major strands which we

noted in the aesthetic thinking of the Nazi leaders. First, there was the need to put art back in touch with the spiritual. Secondly, to cleanse it of any lingering influence of cultural bolshevism ie. 'suppression of the economic'. Finally, the creation of a more democratic form of culture.

The Chambers' scope was nationwide, being sub-divided along regional lines. Internally, they were structured according to the 'Fuhrerprinzip', power being concentrated at all levels in the figure of the President and the hierarchy of subordinates beneath him. Only the President could decide on questions of membership, which amounted to having the power to decide who could practise within a particular art form, since exclusion from the chamber meant economic death for the individual involved.

The Chamber of Fine Arts

This Chamber was split up into a number of sub-sections covering painting, sculpture, architecture, graphic design, arts & crafts, interior design, art dealers and publishers, and landscape gardening. The first President of the Chamber was a Professor Zeigler, a personal favourite of Hitler, and it was by his appointment that the Fuhrer was able to give a clear indication of what kind of painting style would meet with favour in the Third Reich. Zeigler's forte was the production of minutely-detailed female nudes, an activity which had earned him the nickname of 'the master of the pubic hair'. The day-to-day tasks of the chamber can be broken down into four types of activity:

(i) the organising of exhibitions of 'German art';

(ii) an attempt to clarify what was to be accepted as German art;

(iii) acting as a channel for state sponsorship,

purchasing and subsidising of the works of favoured artists;

(iv) acting, like all the other chambers, as the chief agents of the censorship laws.

Almost the first piece of legislation enforced by the Chamber was the exclusion from membership of any Jewish painter or artist. This was to be followed by a similar exclusion of anyone who painted in the style labelled as 'decadent modernism'. This purge was effected by the application of varying degrees of censorship which at each stage entailed an increasing severity. The first level was 'Lehrverbot', which deprived the individual of the right to teach. Second was the 'Ausstellungsverbot', which placed a complete ban on the artist exhibiting his work. The final stage was 'Malverbot', whereby the artist was forbidden to work at all, whether in public or in private. This last sanction was enforced by surprise spot-checks on the homes of artists known to favour modernist styles - (there are stories of the Gestapo examining the brushes of banned artists to see if they were wet). Lists of Malverbot artists were circulated to art-supply shops in order to stop paint or canvas reaching them. The effect upon artists unfortunate enough to continue living in the Third Reich was disastrous. For instance, Oscar Schlemmer, a leading painter of the Expressionist school, was forced to earn a living by painting camouflage designs onto the municipal gasometer in Stuggart. But those choosing exile were always a minority: the majority of artists submitted to the demands of the Fine Arts Chamber such that by 1936 its membership consisted of 15,000 architects, 14,300 painters, and 2,900 sculptors.

The philosophy underlying the working of each of these Chambers derived directly from those elements of corporatist thinking which had been common in the pre-1933 Nazi ideology. Each chamber was represented as being a self-managing guild or corporation in which power was given back to the actual practitioners. However, the way in which each chamber actually conducted its internal affairs was, of course, in flat contradiction to this claim. The chain of command and the decision-making process was always strictly one-directional ie. from the top to the bottom. So although much was made of the fact that the chambers would enable practising artists to control the conditions under which they worked, the actual brief of the chamber had remarkably little to do with any notion of self-management:

> "(1) those who mix up individual with community purposes in a way confusing to the public.
>
> (2) whoever is inclined to weaken the power of the German nation at home or abroad, the community will of the German people, the German military, Culture or Economy, or who injures the religious sensitivities of others.
>
> (3) who offends against the honour and values of Germans.
>
> (4) who illegally, the honour or prosperity of any other person, harms his calling, and makes him laughable or base.
>
> (5) who opposes the customs on any other grounds." (9)

shall be excluded from membership and subjected to sanctions. The real target of these decrees, which were established without prior discussion and remained unchanged, was the content of the various arts - their public face - rather than an attempt to transform the conditions of artistic production. Thus, within the limits

laid down, Goebbels could stress "the healthy affect of private initiative and free competition":

> "The Press [read 'culture'] shall be uniform in will and multiform in carrying out that will." (10)

This was the 'freedom with responsibility' incorporated into the organisations of artistic producers, and "if the creative artist is conscious of this common need, then he is unhampered in his activity" (11).

## ROSENBERG'S NATIONAL SOCIALIST COMMUNITY OF CULTURE

This organisation was the bone that Hitler threw to Rosenberg after his defeat in the controversies of the 1933-1934 period. The National Socialist Culture Group was set up on June 4th, 1933, and eventually absorbed the old Kampfbund fur Deutsche-kultur. Rosenberg, in finally agreeing to head this organisation, was, in effect, ditching his old volkisch comrades who from this point on gradually faded into obscurity. The 'Community of Culture' was a non-starter from the moment of its inception, since Goebbels retained his grip on the arts through the various bureaucracies of the Ministry of Propaganda. The brief written for the organisation was for it to act as

> "leader of the entire programme for the education of the party in spiritual and weltanschaung matters." (12)

By placing its sphere of operation inside the party, Hitler gave Rosenberg the impression that his role would be one of overall watchdog, delegated to ensure that no new manifestations of cultural bolshevism would rear their head. The difficulty was that Rosenberg was now cut off from access to the professional

artists and found himself limited to organising clubs for 'concerned' laymen in the party, where stimulation of the approved art was to be fostered. All that was left of Rosenberg's vision of a radical volkisch community and a radical volkisch art was a vaguely-worded paragraph referring to his "responsibility for the cultural reconstruction of the people"(13).

As far as the practical implementation of any policies were concerned, the National Socialist Culture Group had a brief flurry of activity in the winter of 1934-35, and then went out of existence. The programme of events that he was able to stage in Berlin that winter replicated almost all of the confusion that we have earlier noted in Rosenberg's thinking. The first strategy was to make themselves responsible for what they termed 'workers' culture'. To this end, Rosenberg published a number of essays in which he attempted to define what he meant by the term. Again the old themes of the abolition of class differences by the initiation of Germany into a state of volkisch community cropped up: class differences simply vanished into thin air with the arrival of the Nazis. The old theme of the alienation of the artist from the community was dealt with at length:

> "occupations ... became classes, and the classes gave birth to class war ... and so art too became divided and isolated ... till it, like all remaining areas, was distant from everyday life." (14)

The answer to this dual alienation of the artist and the people was the creation of a situation where it would again be possible for the artist to 'go amongst the people'. To this end, Rosenberg

and the National Socialist Culture Group attempted to penetrate Ley's D.A.F. and set up exhibitions of German art in factories. After a few weeks, however, this project fell to pieces, largely because of the hostility encountered from the defeated radicals who had found some kind of shelter within D.A.F. This defeat led the Culture Group to try to stage exhibitions of 'model National Socialist products' in Berlin. The 'products' were largely the work of amateurs and were soaked in the old volkisch themes of Blood and Soil. One typical example of this Kulturfest was a cantata,by an obscure amateur composer, entitled 'A Man Builds a Cathedral'. A disillusioned Rosenberg grafted on to this minor work the whole battery of his cultural regeneration ideology in one last fling:

> "it was the first attempt on a large scale to cast into the mould of art the great experiences of the last twenty years and the sentiment of the new myths ... and demonstrated the possibility of giving a religious meaning to our national resurrection." (15)

By 1935 the 'NS Kulturgemeinde' had ceased to operate in any real sense, having been swallowed up by Ley's voracious 'Strength through Joy' organisation. In terms of art and cultural matters, Rosenberg was finished, and gradually began to move over into other areas which interested him eg. foreign policy. He still gave the ritual address during the 'Days of Culture' which always opened the annual party rallies, but took no actual part in the implementation of cultural policy. In 1937 he was awarded a prize for his work in art and, with supreme cheek, Goebbels made the presentation.

* * * * *

# CHAPTER V

## Some Problems of Style in Nazi Architecture

This section is not intended to be an exhaustive account of the many-faceted building programme embarked upon by the Nazis during the period of their rule. Rather I want to address myself to certain problems which are raised by comparing certain types of Nazi building, and, more specifically, the ideological meaning of the differing 'styles of these buildings. Again they can be related to the central problematic of the thesis in that Nazi architecture claimed to be a radical-revolutionary form of architecture, capable of expressing for the first time a truly communal public set of values. The various styles utilised, which were invariably termed 'national', were in fact class-bound and incapable of fulfilling the revolutionary role envisaged for them. Thus, in this section I wish to analyse the buildings in the following way:

(1) the overt, conscious ideological content embodied in the styles of certain buildings. This will involve looking at the way in which the buildings realise the ideas which the Nazis held about the role architecture should play.

(2) the covert ideological content of the buildings. This will be closely related to the failure to generate a distinctive National Socialist style, which in turn is part of the wider contradiction between the stated intentions of the Nazis and the real development taken by Nazi society.

(3) the more general question of the set of determinants which were operating on the choice of building styles; in fact, the 'fit' between architectural content and the political and economic forces at work in the society.

The Nazi building programme only really got under way after the aesthetic controversy of 1934-1935 was brought to an abrupt end by the personal intervention of Hitler. Hitler's hasty attempt to construct a consensus in the arts, over the heads of the major participants in the debate, only half succeeded. What he did manage to achieve was to put an end, once and for all, to any open debate about the role which the arts were to play. More specifically, he was able to silence any attempts to discuss culture in terms of its 'revolutionary' role. However, he was never able, and possibly never willing, to give any clear indication of the direction in which the arts were to move. He established a consensus of fear rather than one of agreement, and this produced a situation in which the old divisions still worked away, separated from each other and incapable of generating any general ideological justification. Thus, after 1934, there was never a monolithic unity within the Nazi movement, rather a confused diversity of silences:

> "Totalitarian uniformity was of the mental, not the material world (and even in the former sphere a wide range of contradictory virtues earned the label 'National Socialist')." (1)

This ideological diversity in the practice of architecture was a continuation of the general problem of the resolution of the diverse elements which had contributed to the Nazi rise to power. The various class-factions which made up the Nazi constituency - lower-middle class disruption, sentimental

artisanry, glorified peasantry, aristocratic contempt for democratic forms - all coupled themselves to the pervasive ideology of militarism, with the result that all these contradictory tensions were to manifest themselves in the Nazi outlook. After 1935, these diverse elements were 'plugged into' the demands created by the real world. Houses had to be built, factories constructed, and the result was a complex whole in which the 'radical' thrust of Nazi architectural thinking was to be pushed aside. There is no one aesthetic face of German fascism, rather a collection of styles, in which certain more obvious 'political' styles operated within a privileged space. The vast majority of the building programme which took place in Germany was a totally pragmatic response to direct social needs. These social needs were made up of pressures issuing from the demands of industry and the military, especially after the rearmament programme got under way. In addition to this, there was the problem of providing housing in the public sector, as the Nazis had inherited from Weimar a chronic shortage of low-cost housing. All these pressures had to be dealt with immediately, and ideological intrusion,in the form of sharply delineated ideas about style, was the last thing they wanted to be bothered about. Moreover, the private building sector continued to function as before, so that "style" in Germany remained to a large extent the product of the taste of those who paid for it, as in the rest of Western Europe." (2)

Thus the desire of the Nazis to lay hold of society and stamp their image upon it through the evolution of a single

unitary style, faltered and fell back under social pressures. All the official styles taken up by the Nazis existed in architectural and social ghettoes, which were valued only in terms of their propaganda function of bearing witness to a more general 'delivery of the goods' and which their isolated status immediately denied.

The two major styles that I have selected for analysis are:

(i) the remnants of the Volkisch tradition

(ii) the personal building projects of Hitler.

THE VOLKISCH IMAGE. The defeat, in September 1934, of the champions of the'volkisch way', had highlighted the central contradiction of the whole of their programme. How could a rural, pre-industrial social image provide the basis for the reorganisation of Germany, and yet intergrate into this image the industrial core that was essential for the rearmament programme central to the notion of a strong Germany? The short answer was that it couldn't. By refusing to ally with the radical, anti-capitalist elements in the party, the Kampfbund found themselves left high and dry with no basis for attaining power. After 1934, this failure of nerve ensured that any revolutionary content which remained in their aesthetic would be confined to the reproduction of images and styles which would achieve no deep penetration , in the sense of affecting social policy over a wide range of issues. Thus they became the official fantasists of the Third Reich, commissioned to:

"create an impression of rural life where none existed." (3).

Even if the Volkisch adherents had gained a position where partial implementation of their social ideas were possible, the implications for the social structure of Germany would have been nothing short of catastrophic:

(a) the working-class would have to be transformed into a peasant/artisan class;

(b) the cities, and their industrial and communication infrastructure, would have to be dismantled.

This was a task that even a 'totalitarian regime' such as Nazi society was incapable of realising. For Hitler, the problem after 1934 was how to tame the volkisch adherents who had always formed a very strong bloc within the rank-and-file of the party. The Röhm purges had certainly rattled many party stalwarts, who chose to remain silent rather than receive the midnight knock on the door. But they still had to be given the illusion of effectiveness, and this Hitler did by taking away their claim on 'totality' but giving them back the partial realm of the aesthetic. They could, within certain limits, build in what style they liked, just so long as this was all they did.

I have chosen two buildings to illustrate this containment of the volkisch element, and also to point out the inadequacy of the style in coming to grips with the real social forces at work in Nazi society:

(i) a Hitler Youth Hostel

(ii) an Air-Force weather service broadcasting station.

It's worth remembering that, although frequently resorted to, the Volkisch style was never employed in any of the major building programmes of the Third Reich. It always occupied a position

on the periphery of Nazi society, and certainly never penetrated the industrial-military complex or the series of major symbolic buildings initiated by Hitler.

The Hitler Youth Hostel (see illustration No: 8)

The Youth organisation of the National Socialists was one of the major inheritors of the volkisch tradition as it had been constituted in the 19th century, and it had, until well on into Nazi rule, resisted any attempt to reduce it to a purely agit-prop organisation. The spirit of the Wandervogel still beat in many a young breast, and this type of building catered directly to this illusion. Like many of the volkisch buildings it is:

(i) small-scale

(ii) situated in a rural setting

(iii) associated with leisure activities.

The building becomes a perfect setting for a bucolic fantasy. In achieving this end the architects drew heavily on the regional styles of pre-industrial Germany, especially in their utilisation of the sharply gabled roofs, the ornate balconies, and the use of 'natural' materials. The sources for these pre-industrial styles would vary from region to region, in each case drawing on the local traditions and even inventing some that had never existed. The volk becomes a reality only away from the cities, and only then in the dimension of leisure. These hostels provide an ideal stage setting for urbanites romanticising the countryside, where the desired organic relationship between people and soil would be finally achieved but only in the mind. They are islands of organic unity, essentially designed to work on their occupants

for the short period of a holiday. They are heightened, idealised versions of the outside rural community which, during the period when these buildings were being used, was witnessing a rise in the rate of depopulation. For this process of idealisation to work, the peasantry always had to be kept in the background: no programmes involving actual work in the rural community were introduced until very late in the war and, even then, certain of the Nazi hierarchy were loathe the use of women on the land until the food shortage drove them to it. These lovers of the rural life seem to have overlooked the fact that women in rural communities had always been an essential part of the labour force. The ousting of the volkisch style into a marginal position is best illustrated by comparison with the policies adopted by the 'Strength through Joy' organisation. One of the departments of this vast organisation was named 'Beauty of Work', and was under the direction of Albert Speer. The aim was to beautify the place of work through the provision of up-to-date canteens, rest rooms and parks. The design styles adopted were taken directly from the Bauhaus and utilised clean, simple lines, coupled with buildings relying heavily upon the use of concrete and glass. However, in the hostels which were erected to house holidaying workers, regional styles abounded. The volkisch style was reduced to providing play areas for tired workers and exhausted party stalwarts. By 1938, even the party bureaucracy began to regard the volkisch tendency as something of a joke:

> "The suburban Berlin type villa in a peasant village is no doubt nonsense. No less of a nonsense, however, is the white-washed Tyrolean peasant house transplanted to a Berlin suburb." (4)

The Air Ministry Weather Broadcasting Station (see illustration No: 9 ) This building, with its slightly whimsical use of the thatched roof and half-timbering characteristic of the North Sea region, could be multiplied a thousand times, and illustrates the way in which the volkisch architectural vision was separated from any social content and reduced to the realm of pure style. Its most obvious characteristic is the clash between the function of the building and the style in which it is constructed, with the modern world of telecommunications being dressed in pre-industrial clothing. The function of the building does not penetrate and organise the style of the building in order to produce a unified whole: rather the style is reduced to the level of a surface patina, with the product of an industrial technology being submerged beneath a rural facade. The ludicrous effect produced by this could be paralelled in the hundreds of garages along the autobahns dressed up as Tyrolean chateaux, or the art galleries which attempted to look like Gothic town halls. One begins to wonder what might have been produced had the regime survived: atomic reactors with thatched roofs? I am not in any way trying to suggest that the use of pre-industrial styles is unique to German Nazism - witness the rows of mock-tudor houses in the London suburbs: what is unique is the use of these styles for overtly political ends, and 'revolutionary' political ends at that. The construction of these buildings in this manner was a conscious political act, both for those who

commissioned them and for those who designed them:

> "For many Nazi officials it reflected a genuine ideological commitment." (5)

Thus the penetration of the Volkisch style into the fabric of the everyday life of the Third Reich was always minimal, and in terms of its ability to constitute the essence of Nazi architecture it was a definite non-starter. In a competition held to design a new party forum, the veteran volkisch architect, Schultze-Naumburg, submitted a design which Hitler dismissed with the comment:

> "It looks like an oversized market-place for a provincial town." (6)

The Utopia of Redeployment

As mentioned earlier, one of the major components of the volkisch ideology was the ensemble of ideas called 'Blood and Soil'. This had had a twin thrust: firstly it had been used to win the support of the peasantry during the 'days of struggle' by elevating them into a glorified model - along with the military - of National Socialist Man; the other prong of the attack had carried within it a very strong anti-urban element. The volk could only realise its potential if its members were rooted back into the soil and landscape of the German countryside. This aspect of the volkisch tendency had always been extremely ambiguous in its attitude towards the status of the proletariat. On the one hand the working-class was seen as a symptom of urban decadence; at the same time they were regarded as capable of salvation, if only they would see the error of their ways, give up their addiction to Marxist ideologies, and return to their true

Nordic foundations.

The debate which the conservatives had had with the Bauhaus during the 20's had focused around the nature of the architecture of the modern metropolis. The Kampfbund had always claimed that the 'Neue Sachlichkeit'style of building was actively encouraging the tendency towards urban decadence: not only was the style thoroughly metropolitan, but the social relationships implicit in the style were leading to a mass proletarianisation of the population. The implication at this stage was that, if they achieved power, the Nazis would not only utilise styles of building that were in direct contradiction to those of the Bauhaus, but would also attempt to create new types of existence which would reverse this trend towards escalating metropolitanism. The way to achieve this, at least in the eyes of the Blood and Soil proponents, was by the wholesale repatriation of the working-class back to the artisan or peasant role. Certainly for some of the more idealistic believers this would entail a geographical move:

> "The dissolution of the metropolis, in order to make our people settled again, to give them again their roots in the soil ... the metropolis had destroyed men's feelings for their homeland ... the reincorporation of the metropolitan populations into the rhythm of the German landscape is one of the principal tasks of the National Socialist Government." (7)

Feder (7a), the author of this lunacy, held power for only a year, and was therefore spared a confrontation with the logical implications of his policies. However, certain housing projects were initiated in an attempt to realise this policy of massive repatriation. They were to become the 'propaganda stars' of the new Reich, with the government advertising them as 'the

Nazi housing programme', although in fact they always comprised only a tiny part of the total housing erected by the National Socialists. Three such housing projects were started - in Aachen, Frankfurt and Munich. On these estates the building of blocks of flats was taboo, since each family was to have its own individual dwelling. In terms of style, the houses displayed the ubiquitous sloping roof, half-timbering and window shutters, (illustrations no:10&11). Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of these estates was the lavish provision of land allocated to each family, which in some cases amounted to a quarter of an acre. The aim of this allocation was, in theory at least, to allow each family to be self-sufficient in food, and to give the occupants a real taste of the rural life. The objective aim of these project, however, was to undercut the base of the working-class, since it was never envisaged that the metropolis would be penetrated by the real peasantry; they were to continue to leave the land and to move to the towns as fodder for the urban factories. Each of the estates was situated in the suburbs of large towns so as to provide the city-dwellers they were intended for with the illusion of 'going rural'. But, as can be seen from the illustrations, they actually looked like rather staid suburbs, having the unmistakeable feel of a contrived urban rurality. Even in terms of the rationale of urban planning the estates proved totally unworkable, since they were occupied by workers in large-scale industrial concerns in which they continued to work. One of the results of this was that they had to travel double the distance to work, a fact that contributed to their inability to fully utilise the enormous grants of land that went

with each house. The final result was that the allotments had to be grassed over and converted into parkland.

The repatriation programme was just one of a whole battery of weapons that were used to overcome the divisions between labour and capital, and between the urban and the rural work force, the final ideological aim being to create the National Socialist Community of Work. But as the volkisch tendency fragmented and fell back from its claim on the totality of Nazi society, mere stylistic affectations were prised out of their political context and thrown about like so much architectural confetti. These estates can be seen as beached whales, fallen dreams of a self-sufficient urban peasantry which failed to materialise. In many of the estates the agricultural self-sufficiency programme quickly degenerated into a passive appreciation of what must have seemed an inordinate amount of supervised greenery, and this at least may have provided the occupants with some form of consolation.

The true face of the Nazi housing programme was not to be found in these ideological adventures, but at the point where reality had to be immediately dealt with. As the decade progressed, and the rearmament programme speeded up, an acute shortage of labour began to disrupt the efficient functioning of certain key industries, such as mining, engineering and the building trade. Despite numerous attempts to control the level of wages and direct the flow of the labour market, a savage competition between these sectors of industry had come into being. The various sections of industry turned

on each other and began a wholesale poaching of each other's workers by luring them with an increasing proliferation of fringe benefits. This had a particularly disastrous effect on the building trade, which had been put under tremendous pressure by a flood of governmental commissions coupled with the demands made on it by the expansion of the armed forces, industry and the autobahn programme. The effect of all this was to increase the mobility of the work force, a fact which eventually played havoc with the Nazi housing programme. Any ideological intrusion into this situation was given short shrift, and blocks of flats were erected which were almost indistinguishable from those of the Weimar period. The rag-bag of volkisch stylistic elements were simply stuck onto the facades as a final dying nod in the direction of the volkisch commitment (illustration no:I2).

As the shortage of labour got worse, with workers shuttling between those employers who offered them the best deal, the housing programme reached a pinnacle of pragmatism:

> "The greatest problem was the catastrophic shortage of housing in the Third Reich ... however, the government increasingly resorted to the physical transfer of labour, housing workers in barracks." (8)

Faced with this situation, it was hardly likely that the wholesale conversion of skilled workers into a quasi-peasantry would be greeted with any great favour by those whose major concern was to get the German armed forces up to strength. By the end of the 1930's the volkisch ideology had been beaten back, finally coming to rest in the sugary canvases of peasant life and the bland prose of the official handout.

The involvement of the National Socialists in mass politics had reduced the volkisch adherents to the status of clockwork figures, hardly any longer even papering over the ideological and economic cracks that were beginning to appear in the alleged unity of Nazi thought and practice.

## NAZI BAROQUE

> "what we now call 'monumental architecture' is first of all the expression of power, and that power exhibits itself in the assemblage of costly building materials and of all the resources of art .... The purpose of this art was to produce respectful terror."
>
> Lewis Mumford (9)

Perhaps the most powerful and condensed image of Nazi Germany is to be found in the mass party rallies which were held each year on the Zeppelin field in Nuremberg. The event, and its setting, through repetition in a thousand photographs, have finally merged so that it becomes difficult to separate the two elements which constitute this image. Its persistence as the ultimate symbol of Nazi 'totalitarianism' would surely indicate that we have at last located the real aesthetic face of National Socialism. However, as soon as we begin to deconstruct this popular impression, we once again find ourselves in a realm even more fantastic than that of the volkisch tendency. Again the eyes of the Nazis are firmly fixed on the past, just as in the half-timbered mock rural dwellings we have just been examining. What is often forgotten about the Nuremberg stadium is that it was only one element in a gigantic complex of party buildings planned to cluster around the stadium, and that this Nuremberg complex was itself only

one of a whole series of such schemes which Hitler had planned to erect. So far I have deliberately resisted using any type of analysis which relied upon the concept of 'personal taste' as a determinant of style. However, when looking at these buildings it is hard to avoid explaining the style and form of these buildings, which were intended to be the crowning achievement of the Third Reich, in terms of the personal taste of the Führer.. The incredible concentration of power in the figures which made up the Nazi leadership, and especially the seemingly unending horizon for action invested in Hitler, would seem to make this a valid approach. But Hitler was not catapulted into some realm of pure freedom: determinants were operating on him to form his taste,and these must be isolated if the category of 'taste' is not to be fetishised, leaving the analysis dependent on the operations of a tyrannical, megalomaniac personality. To be a megalomaniac in terms of architecture means that the position one occupies places no constraint on projects in terms of labour, cost or scale. Having said this, it is still a fact that the imagination of the architect and of the sponsor are still in the realm of history. At first sight it might appear that we are entering the realm of some transcendent utopia, simply a mental construct, borne of the fusion of the personal fantasies of Speer and Hitler, until we realise that a start was in fact made on all of the buildings to be described in the following section. They may appear to be fantastic, and they certainly were, but they were all eminently realisable.

Hitler, during his days in Vienna, had tried and failed to enrol as an architectural student, and this passion for building

was to remain with him until the end. The architecture of a nation became, literally, his private hobby, and was the only area where he personally intervened to realise his aesthetic ideas. The power which his position gave him to largely ignore questions of materials and cost in his building projects was paralleled by a dropping away of constraints on his imagination and that of his architect, Albert Speer. Both Speer and Hitler finally coalesced, drifting off into a hermetic architectural heaven.. And as Speer states in his autobiography:

> "I was accustomed to his [Hitler] occassionally saying things that sounded hallucinatory." (10)

I have, therefore, divided the following section into:

(i) an account of Hitler's ideas about the role of architecture;

(ii) a description of the major building projects;

(iii) an analysis of why these particular styles were chosen.

## Hitler's Ideas About Architecture

> "It is essential that our adherents should know that our buildings are arising in order to strengthen this authority."
>
> Adolf Hitler (11)

Hitler's ideas about architecture centred around the basic division which he made between public and private architecture.. By 'private' he did not simply mean construction carried out in the private sector of the economy, but construction which expressed private values. Only those buildings which were intended to express public and social values held any interest for him. Thus he ignored the majority of the building programmes of the Third Reich. Hitler's

notion of the social function of architecture was about the only area where he thought through aesthetic problems with any consistency.. He conceived of architecture as the most important of mass cultural modes: it was the most ideologically charged of man's artefacts and the only area which could most adequately give form to the spiritual aspirations of the nation.. For him, the crucial shift in the development of architecture was the movement from a dimension of pure economics into a realm of symbolism, since it was in his symbolic activity that man gave expression to the spiritual (which, in Hitler's aesthetic, was always communal). Thus the provision of shelter or work-space was outside his interest and consideration. The buildings which attracted him were the Parthenon, the Pyramids and the Gothic cathedrals, and he saw himself as the continuation of this building tradition:

> "At the present moment the most important point would appear to me to be that we should make a distinction between the erection of public buildings and private buildings. The building created by the people as a whole must represent those who commissioned it." (12)

His supreme ambition was to create National Socialist 'monuments' which, in common with all previous examples of monumental architecture, would embody public values, only this time it would be expressive of the spirit of the new Germany. These 'monuments' would constitute the new order in a concrete yet symbolic form. It is at this point that he came up against the general problems of representation, a problem that had dogged the architecture of the 19th century. Where were the original forms and styles that would be adequate to the task which Hitler set the new German architecture? His solution was no different from that of an earlier age ('bourgeois' he called it) and

he sought refuge in the columns of classicism, whilst at the same time condemning the 19th century:

> "Unfortunately in a bourgeois age the architectural development in public life was sacrificed to objects serving capitalistic enterprises. The great task in the history of culture which lies before National Socialism consists above all in abandoning this tendency." (13)

This reduction of the public realm to a collection of private interests lay at the root of the failure of the 19th century, since private interest could never generate the 'eternal monuments' that Hitler yearned after:

> "Therefore the building of great architectural monuments ... and the achievements and the results inspired by this ambition have above all else mediated to humanity the true community spirit." (14)

This fixation on the past gave rise to certain bizarre elements in his approach to building. Firstly, there was a strong national inferiority complex at work in which 'bigger' automatically equalled 'better'. He wanted to be the author of the world's largest buildings - (Speer's account of the planning stage is dotted with references to how much bigger his buildings would be than any which had gone before). Secondly, this monumentality of scale was to be accompanied by an equally monumental time scale. The Parthenon, although in ruins, retained its essence and was still able to speak to succeeding generations of 'the glory that was Greece'. Hitler wanted his buildings to do the same thing for Germany, even though the political structures which had made them possible should eventually crumble. In order to achieve this effect he decreed that his constructions should obey the 'law of ruins', so that in decay they would still convey

the greatness of the Reich. Speer says of the planning of the Zeppelin field:

> "To this end we planned to avoid, as far as possible, all such elements of modern construction such as steel girders and reinforced concrete, which are subject to weathering. Despite their height, the walls were intended to withstand the impact of the wind even if the roofs and ceilings were so neglected that they no longer braced the walls." (15)

The symbolic function of this public architecture was seen as flowing in two directions, in that it both expressed the communal values of the nation and reflected them back to the mass, and it was in this second function that the architecture became directly political, with the line between public expression and public repression getting increasingly vague.. If the 'community' didn't have these values before the buildings were constructed, then they soon would have:

> "For it is precisely these buildings which will cooperate to unify our people politically more closely than ever before and strengthen it: for the Germans as a society, these buildings will inspire a proud consciousness that each and all belong together: they will prove how ridiculous in our social life are all earthly differences when faced with this might, gigantic witness to the life we share as a community; they will, by their effect upon the minds of men, fill the citizens of our people with a limitless self-confidence as they remember that they are Germans." (16)

There are some very large holes in this logic, the most obvious one being that the methods used to ascertain what precisely these public values were, were virtually non—existent. The Fuhrer, as the embodiment of the people, had no need to stoop to such vulgar, mechanical operations. The result was that no-one, apart from Speer and Hitler, had any say whatsoever in the planning of these buildings. What would have been the largest building project of all time was to be the responsibility of just two men. Even party officials were excluded and took no part in the planning of these

monumental complexes: in fact, they were to frequently complain about the amount of time that Hitler spent locked away with Speer, ignoring the more practical matter of running Germany. Underneath the rhetoric embodied in the continual use of such terms as 'public', 'communal' and 'national', the real nature of Hitler's buildings are clearly discernible: they are the expressions of an absolute power and conform to Lewis Mumford's first law of monumentality in that they involve

> "a change of scale deliberately meant to awe and overpower the beholder." (17)

The 'heroic' phase of Nazism was initially to find its image in the austere neo-classical columns of Troost's 'House of German Art', but, significantly, this was to give way rapidly to an image derived from the Baroque of the 18th century, an era that was dominated by centralised despotism, the rise of nationalism, and the spectacle of unrestrained militarism. The Baroque style was to prove the only one that allowed for the construction of a total spectacle of unified power. It is an architecture in which the mass of the people are singularly absent, where they are pushed to the edge of the drama to witness passively their own enslavement.

> "Even the demented exponent of Nazism, with his deliberate regression to the savage gods of Germanism, cast his fantasies of dehumanised power into an appropriately classic extravagance of emptiness." (18)

The Building Projects

> "The State must not be a force without beauty": Hitler (19)
>
> "Power lives on stolen goods": Anon

Any analysis of the building projects planned by Hitler and Speer has

to account for the 'choice' of particular styles, and relate this to the real, objective development of Nazi society. I want to deal with these problems in the final section of the thesis and, for the moment, bracket them out in favour of a description of the personal architectural fantasies dreamed up by the Führer.

The erection of 'eternal monuments' to the power of the Third Reich began in a modest way with the commissioning of the architect, Troost, to design the 'House of German Art' in 1933. This building was intended to serve as home for the regeneration of German Painting and Sculpture that was confidently expected at any moment. The eternal spirit of art was, in this case, to be embodied in the use of Doric columns, and whilst the building hardly breaks new architectural ground, and in no sense of the term could be said to express the 'uniqueness' of the German soul, it certainly does not deserve the derision which has been heaped upon it by later commentators:

> "The 'House of German Art' was a monstrous, outsized pastiche in the classical manner with an unaccented pillored facade." (20)

The building was no better or worse than a thousand such examples of neo-classicism that were erected during the inter-war period (Illustration No:13 ). The building was finally completed in 1937, the architect having died meanwhile in 1934. From all accounts Troost's widow seems to have been one of the few people left in Germany to remain unimpressed by Hitler's charisma, and zealously resisted his persistent efforts to transform the building into 'wedding cake' baroque. The trouble with all qualitative judgements about Nazi architecture is that they completely miss the point, and are based upon an over-eager desire to reject the values of the

regime by a rejection of its cultural objects. The absurdity of the building does not lie in its style considered as an isolated fact, but in terms of a much wider configuration which has to take into account its intended function and the expressions of German art which were installed inside it. It is only when we do this that we can begin to see what a hotch-potch of art styles and muddled aesthetics had been institutionalised by the Third Reich. The classical style of the 'House of German Art' attempts to provide a spatial and ideological framework for the 'masterpieces' of the new German art. But what were these paintings like? Immediately this severe neo-classical setting begins to jar since the majority of the canvases on show were detailed portrayals of an idealised, sentimental vision of rural life. Even the kitsch 'classical' nudes are unmistakeably derived from the advances the invention of the camera made possible in the field of pornography. This confusion was compounded by the festivals that were staged in and around the building on the holiday set aside for the celebration of German art. In these parades S.S. men were dressed in mediaeval costumes and were made to carry examples of German art which ranged from sickly nudes through to pre-Roman teutonic symbols (Illustration No: I4 ). The combined effect of this almost surrealistic collage of styles and periods must have been truly bewildering:

> "on the opening day of the First Exhibition of German Art, Munich hung out its flags. In the streets, perspiring Teuton warriors manhandled a giant sun and carried the tinfoil-covered cosmic ash tree Yggdrasil (of German legend) in solemn procession. 'Nornen' on stilts dexterously sidestepped overhead tram cables as they continued weaving the loom of fate, and columns of wimpled chatelaines and mediaeval burgesses evoked the age of Albrecht Durer and Lucas Cranach." (21)

The antics which took place outside the building were infinitely more interesting than the 'real' art hanging on the walls inside.

The Nuremberg Party Complex

This was the first of the projects that Hitler and Speer planned jointly after the restraining influence of Troost ceased in 1934. The immediate change is the enormous jump in scale of the buildings, and Hitler's obsession with the equation 'biggest is best' was for the first time given full rein. If they had been completed, they would easily have constituted the largest buildings of their kind in the world. The whole complex has to be seen as a celebration of the failure of the party to absorb the state and push through the 'second revolution' - (Hitler's planned reconstruction of Berlin was a massive statement that the state was supreme in the Third Reich). These buildings are not a sop, thrown to the party as some kind of compensation, since every aspect of their layout speaks of the overt subordination of the party to the Fuhrer and the Nazi state. Hence the continuing replication of podia, 'triumphal arches' and avenues, plus parade grounds - all devices for the party to parade past the leader, to be inspected, addressed and, finally, coerced. Like the example of the 'House of German Art', these buildings are only 'completed' by taking into account the function that they performed. In the case of the party complex, they were to provide a setting for the creation of 'mass spectacles' and the Nazi version of national festivities. Again it must be remembered that these buildings were designed in total isolation from the rest of the Nazi party: no one, apart from Hitler and Speer, were to have any say whatsoever

in their design and layout. Thus they represent Hitler's conception of the party, which was based on the absolute domination of it by the state and the Fuhrer.

The Complex was to consist of a number of major elements, of which the Zeppelin field, (the Nuremberg Stadium), was the only one to be completed (Illustration No:15 ). The other parts were:

(i) The Marzfeld. This was situated to the south of the complex and was a vast area of flat land (3,400 x 2,300 feet ), designed as a forum for the staging of 'realistic' military manoeuvres. It was the 'Colosseum' of Nuremberg, and the final intention for the building was to allow about 160,000 people to watch miniature wars staged by the German armed forces.

(ii) Alongside the Marzfeld was a complex of meeting halls where the party faithful could assemble to hear their leader address them. The largest of these halls could accommodate up to 100,000 people standing. There was even a special building set aside for Hitler to expound on his favourite topic, Kultur.

(iii) Running north from the Kulturhalle was a vast triumphal avenue. This was made of granite and was intended to be used for military reviews. This avenue was actually laid down before the outbreak of war.

(iv) The piece de resistance of the whole network of buildings was to be the party stadium (Illustration No: 16).

Again it must be stressed that we are not in the realm of utopia in the sense that (i) the buildings were technically possible to build; and (ii) the social system that produced them was able to realise them in terms of materials and labour ie. they were not beyond the resources available to Germany at that time. If the stadium had been completed its overall size would have been colossal. It was meant to seat 400,000 people at one meeting and, in order to achieve this, the topmost stands would have been 300 ft. high. In his memoirs, Speer rather sheepishly confesses that it would have enclosed a volume three times greater than the Great Pyramid.

The Berlin Project

If the Nuremberg Complex was to provide the party with its own playground, the problem of providing the Nazi state with a fitting stage-set still remained. Hitler was acutely conscious of the 'accidental' nature of Berlin as the capital of Germany. In his eyes it was still primarily the capital of Prussia, and as yet did not dominate the rest of Germany in an adequate manner. Very soon after assuming power, he began to plan the reconstruction of Berlin in order to bring it up to date with its new role - the capital of the Third Reich. In conformity with Hitler's domination by the Baroque model of the city, the triumphal avenue was to provide the axis around which all the other elements

would be organised. Hitler's avenue was to outdo all others, and was to be a three-mile long processional way, cutting through the suburbs of Berlin and gradually drawing the spectator towards the climax of the whole project - the Fuhrer himself:

> "All the main avenues would lead to the palace. And when one raised one's eyes in the street, the palace, as often as not, would close the vista." (22)

The vistas that Hitler planned would start at the moment of arrival in Berlin with the new central railway station, which always seemed to provide a central focus for fascist architectural fantasies. This new station was to be built to accommodate four levels of traffic:

> "The station plaza, 3300' long by 1000' wide, was to be lined with captured weapons after the fashion of the avenue of Ramses which leads from Karnak to Luxor." (23)

The avenue was to be lined with the buildings housing the bureaucracies of the state, all of which were to be designed in a uniform style. One of the high points of these buildings were to be the private palaces of the Nazi leadership, of which the most fantastic was to be that of that Nazi arch-hedonist, Goering. This ornament-encrusted monstrosity was a pure hymn to 'unqualified power':

> "Alleging the need for air-raid protection, I decided to cover the roof with thirteen feet of garden soil, which meant that even large trees would have been able to strike root there (it was May 5th 1941). Thus I envisioned a 2½ acre roof garden, with swimming pools and tennis courts, and finally a summer theatre for 240 spectators above the roofs of Berlin."(24)

Speer breaks in at this point in his narrative to provide us with a glimpse of the sort of transformation he, and the party elite, had been going through since the seizure of power:

> "The whole thing was pure spectacle. This was a decisive step in my development from the

> neo-classicism I had first espoused ... to a blatant nouveau-riche architecture of prestige." (25)

The Grand Avenue was to be framed with a triumphal arch in the style of the Arc de Triomphe. Hitler intended it to be an eternal monument to the German dead of the 1st World War and, as such, it had to be of a suitable dimension. The plans demanded that the arch be 400 ft. high - (41 times the size of the Arc de Triomphe) - and encrusted with Nazi symbolism.

Through the arch one could see, in the distance, what was probably the most extreme of all the architectural fantasies dreamed up by Hitler - the great meeting hall of the Reich. What exactly the function of this building was to be is extremely vague, since Hitler planned to retain the Reichstag, even though he saw it as a defunct institution. From what one can make out, the Great Hall was to be the place where it would be possible for the Fuhrer to address all the 'representatives' of the Greater Reich all together. The building was designed to hold between 150,000 and 180,000 people standing, and was organised around a central podium from which Hitler would address the assembled throng. The crowning feature of the building was, of course, the dome which, if completed, would have been 726 ft. high - (again, trial foundations were sunk). The square in front of the Great Hall, named the 'Adolf Hitler Platz', was designed to hold a million people. Speer's description of the whole complex spells out the extent to which Hitler, who in his personal habits was both ascetic and modest, came close to the realisation of his most 'utopian' dreams:

> "The avenue between the two central railroad stations was meant to spell out in architecture the political, military and economic power of Germany. In the centre sat the absolute monarch of the Reich and, in his immediate proximity,as the highest expression of his power, was the great domed hall." (26)

But the 'utopia' he produced in these buildings is neither the ravings of a megalomaniac, nor the 'communal dream of a classless society' envisaged by the adherents of the volkisch ideology: rather it was the architectural form of a totally unfettered capitalist state. Hitler's architectural 'playfulness' is a function of the enslavement of the working-class, and it is precisely in terms of this relationship that the Baroque style of so many of these buildings can be explained. The Baroque is an architecture of exclusion, and it is precisely the exclusion of the German proletariat that delineated the freedom of Hitler. As Speer, looking back on the products of this period, was to comment:

> "When I once again saw the colour photographs of the model, after a lapse of more than 21 years, I was struck by the resemblance to a Cecil B. de Mille set. Along with its fantastic quality, I also became aware of the cruel element in this architecture. It had been the very expression of tyranny." (27)

* * * * * *

# CHAPTER VI

## NAZI PAINTING

"Hitherto art is inseparable from morality and utility."

Baudelaire (1)

In this section of the thesis I want to analyse certain types of painting which were encouraged under the Nazi regime and which were eventually elevated to the status of 'National Socialist Art'. As I tried to draw out in an earlier section, the relationship between painting and the state - and society in general - was formulated in a very different way from that which existed in societies organised on liberal democratic lines. Under Nazi rule, painting was conceived of as the aesthetic face of the regime, and was therefore always regarded as being in an intimate relationship with the political forms and aims of the National Socialist movement. Thus the role of the state was seen,not simply as one of general 'humane' patronage of the arts, but rather as the highest form of aesthetic expression, occupying a space where art and politics became fused. In the minds of many of the Nazi elite, it was impossible to separate a purely political practice from a purely artistic practice. Thus any analysis,which does not, from the outset, face up to the nature of the Nazi state, is bound to confront a number of problems which it will find impossible to solve. In a sense, the analytical tools for such an analysis have to be generated from scratch, since the equipment available within traditional art history is totally unsuitable, if not to say irrelevant, to the task of such an analysis. The reason for this inadequacy

lies in the nature of the painting which has become identified with the European artistic avant-garde. Within the study of modern European art, the output, premises and assumptions of the avant-garde have become synonomous with painting generally. In fact, 'modern art' has come to stand for the complex, international tradition of formalistic experimentation which developed inside European painting after the Impressionists. This has created a situation in which any painting which does not 'fit' into this generalised historical schema becomes an ambiguous object for study. The discourse within the discipline has become firmly fixed, and is based upon the assumption that art always occupies an autonomous realm, ultimately independent of society. Any attempt to subvert this claim to autonomy, or at least to qualify it, is immediately seen as non-art. Certain political assumptions are, of course, embedded in this set of premises: firstly, that it is self-evident that artistic freedom must be preserved at all costs; secondly, that art and politics must always remain separate. Any attempt to challenge, or to explain socially, the features of the extreme individualism so characteristic of modern art or of the hidden congruence between art and politics, is seen as lying beyond the province of art history. Thus, within the body of art history there is a theoretical absence which makes it very difficult for the discipline to come to terms with any type of painting that takes place outside the avant-garde - (the sycophantic response to 'primitive' painters has in no way led to a reformulation of the discipline's approach to popular culture: these examples are simply reprocessed in terms of the 'vitality of the forms' type of arguement). Another result of this absence is that its response to systems of aesthetics which deny the equation

painting = avant-garde has always remained crude and unthought-out. The two major examples of this are socialist realism, and the type of painting produced under the Nazis. In terms of Nazi painting, we can reduce the discussions of it to three basic approaches:

(1). The Moral Approach: with this type of approach, the initial response is one of laughter. The paintings are self-evidently absurd, and technically bad. Neither of these responses are valid. First, the paintings were not absurd to the masses of painters who came in out of the cold during the Nazi rule, nor were they absurd to the millions of people who apparently queued up to see them at the exhibitions staged by the Nazis. Secondly, the concept of the truth of a painting lying in its status as a highly-wrought piece of craftsmanship was given a final death blow, even within the tradition of high art, by the explicitly grubby quality of Dadaist works. In fact, in terms of their ability to render visual reality in an immediately graspable form, many of the works are of a high quality. Certainly they are no worse, or better, than the work of painters outside Germany who were still operating within the realist tradition eg. Norman Rockwell, or the paintings hung on the walls of the Royal Academy during its summer exhibitions. What really lies behind this rhetorical dismissal in terms of craftsmanship is a critique of their spiritual content, and this leads straight to direct political considerations and the whole Pandora's box which had been blocked off by 'formalist' categories of analysis.

(2). The Propaganda Argument: this school of criticism is based upon a series of premises which, to some extent, replicate the arguments outlined above. The crudest form of response to the entry of political content into artistic practice is the simple belief that the two realms should always be kept separate; that the task of art is not to convey a political 'message', but rather to rise above mere politics and aspire to the spiritual, the general, or to a 'common humanity'. Thus, the most damning judgement which can be passed on a work of art is that it is 'simply propaganda'. The problem here is that propaganda is defined as that which displays a purely political content. Thus, it is not propaganda as such which is disturbing, but this particular form of propaganda. After all, many of the high points of European painting have consisted of gratuitous propaganda for the almighty and his earthly representatives. What is being objected to is the particular historical confrontation between radical politics and the aims of the avant-garde, and the difficulties which are involved in such a conjuncture. The plea behind the cry 'It's all propaganda' is that the separation between avant-garde art and politics should continue.

There is a more sophisticated version of the propaganda argument which does not object to political involvement and political content per se, but which then goes on to point out the dangers inherent in such involvement. For instance, the incompatibility of the demands of the revolution and the pursuit of a personal vision may result in a situation where one is laid open to manipulation and artistic sell-out - (the Surrealists were to part company with the French Communist Party on precisely

these lines). It is only by remaining true to one's personal vision, so the argument goes, that one is able to resist such pressures. There is now a great deal of experience to back up this nervousness which many advanced artists feel in the face of radical politics, Stalinist Russia and Germany during the thirties providing the two most obvious examples. But again, behind this arguement, there lies the same assumption that we encountered in its more simple version. What is being resisted is the collapse of artistic practice into purely political practice, and it completely overlooks those situations where, for admittedly only a short time, some kind of congruence was possible between personal vision and political ends.

There is, also, a rather ironic rejoinder to the claim that all Nazi painting was merely political propaganda: this is that it is precisely the elimination of certain kinds of political content which makes Nazi painting distinctive. The elimination of politics is the political mode of the painting, and what was seen as a purely aesthetic project by many of the artists and critics of the avant-garde was, quite correctly, seen by the Nazis as being implicitly political.

(3). The Theoretical Absence: this type of approach we have touched on earlier. Here the subject simply does not exist and can, therefore, be carefully avoided in any history of modern painting. The way in which this becomes possible is very close to Raymond Williams' notion of the 'received tradition'. According to this, one's history is accepted as a final and completed whole. Each stage in the past irresistibly led to its following stage,

and the whole edifice moves inexorably towards the validation of the present. Thus the history of European painting in the 20th century becomes a series of extraordinary jumps in time and space, with the assumed 'thread' being blandly traced from the emergence of one 'ism' to its inevitable successor. The effects of this approach upon the period we are studying can be judged from the chapter headings of a number of standard reference works on the art of the period:

(i) Gerhard Handler: 'German Painting in our Time'.

In this book, 'our time' officially ends with 1945, but could just as easily have been terminated in 1933. The discussion is confined to a few select painters of the Expressionist school, and, although just over half of the period he is discussing was under the domination of the Nazis, they are never mentioned once.

(ii) Hans Roethel: 'Modern German Painting'. Again the sole mention which the period 1933-1945 gets is the following quotation:

"When the horror of National Socialism destroyed humanity and the arts in 1933 .... " (2)

Again there is the assumption that what the Nazis were doing was 'non-art' and can, therefore, safely be ignored.

(iii) Kristian Setriffer: 'Modern Austrian Art'

Again, the sequence of chapter headings tells the same story: 'New Developments after the Secession' (ends in 1930); 'New Beginnings in 1945'. (3)

(iv) Georgs Schmidt: 'Malerei im Deutschland'.

The chapter headings here looked more promising in that there seemed to be an attempt to relate the art of the period to the wider historical context of the Weimar Republic. However, the 'received tradition' was at work even in this book: 'Chapter II: Von der Stabilisierung bis zum Krise. 1924-1929. Einkehr und Ausbruch'; 'Chapter III: Das Bauhaus: 1919-1932. Werkplatz der Zukunft'; 'Chapter IV: Vorkreig und Kreig, 1930-1945, Untergrund und Emigration'. (4)

The type of approach which I want to adopt in the analysis of Nazi painting is twofold. Firstly, there must be some attempt to describe the range of themes, the style adopted and, just as important, the themes and styles which were shunned or forbidden, in short a typology of depiction. Secondly, there must be some kind of consideration of the ideological claims made by the Nazis that they had replaced, and overcome, the tradition of the avant-garde - what Benjamin calls 'the tradition of alienated sensuality'. There must be some assessment of their claim to have succeeded in creating a totally radical set of conditions under which artistic practice was to take place: in other words, of the 'truth' of their claim to have created a radical National Socialist culture.

THE TYPOLOGY OF DEPICTION IN NAZI PAINTING

"In the second case, history is transformed into

> the 'irrational rule of blind forces' which is embodied at best in the 'spirit of the people' or in 'great men'. It can, therefore, only be described pragmatically, but it cannot be rationally understood. Its only possible organisation would be aesthetic, as if it were a work of art."
>
> G. Lukacs. (5)

The central rationale behind most of Nazi culture, and especially underlying the painting, was the claim made by the Nazis that the 'revolution' of 1933 had brought into existence a transcendent, ideal community, a society dominated by the principles of 'volksgemeinschaft'. Their supposed transcendence of the liberal democratic forms characteristic of the Weimar Republic, and their substitution of a form of national and racial community, lead logically to an intolerance of any factional or separated constituency within this seamless bond of blood. This desire for social intergration, which was not simply the result of some abstract totalitarian urge, was the very basis of the policy of 'Gleichschaltung'. This was aimed at every aspect of German society in order that it might both reflect and realise the coming into being of the national community. I have already hinted, in the section on architecture, that the achievement of this ideal community became increasingly elusive and peripheral to the general dynamic of the society after the taking over of power. However, in the realm of painting, these illusions were sustained for a much greater length of time. The paintings came to provide both the rulers and the ruled with windows into an idealised world, where reality and ideology achieved the illusion of a perfect 'fit'. This, I think, is one of the reasons why the Nazis were so concerned with the establishment of an ideological and cultural conformity in painting. The images presented by the

paintings maintain this picture of an ideal community and, at the same time, provide proof that it is in existence. The acute paranoia displayed towards the avant-garde was, of course, partly ideological - they just did not like that sort of painting - but it was also based on fear of what the whole of the avant-garde represented, namely an artistic community still alienated from the general social reality and, flowing from this, the implication that there was a continuing search for spiritual and social ideals within a fragment divorced from the rest of society. The continuing existence of the avant-garde was living proof that the 'total spiritual renewal' had, in fact, been only partial.

Within the total spread of the paintings, it is possible to identify a number of common characteristics, both in terms of content (theme), and in terms of style. The feature which strikes one immediately is the unity of their style, achieving such a high degree of 'coherence' that only a close study of the pictures will allow one to begin to distinguish the work of individual artists. Above all, it is an art totally lacking in stylistic surprise or experimentation - a characteristic which derives from an absence of any personal component or subjective vision - and, as such, it stands in complete opposition to that body of work which has come to be called 'modern art'. This unity of style is, in itself, a political act, and only achieves its political message by presupposing that which is absent, namely modern art. By this I mean that the paintings can only work as a contrast to the work of the avant-garde. The dominant style of all Nazi painting is an extreme form of

representationalism, in which each painting allows an immediate recognition of the objects depicted. Thus the paintings of the Nazis are ancestors of the tradition of photographic realism and are, therefore, despite the apologists for Socialist Realism, sharers of a common heritage with the anodyne images of perfect workers produced in the Eastern bloc. This allegiance to a kind of photographic reworking of reality fulfilled Hitler's precis of German culture in which he stated that "to be German is to be clear". But beyond this, the style is able to achieve two major ends. Firstly, it satisfies the desire of the mass of the population to recognise what it is that is being depicted, thereby immediately answering the first question directed at an image ie. "What is it?". Secondly, it performs a vital cultural/political task in that the style reassures the spectator that obscurantism of form has at last been abolished and that everyone can breathe easily again. In terms of their style, these paintings are saying, in a covert way, "Isn't it good to be able to recognise the world again" and also, by implication, "Isn't it good to be able to recognise oneself again". This element of mass reassurance is the 'work' performed by the style of the paintings, quite apart from their content. Thus, from the outset, we have a political statement embedded in the paintings which conforms to the demand for 'An art for the People'.

Having said this, however, there are still wider questions which need answering: why was such a style able to achieve this at this particular historical moment? To answer this we have to look at the historical development of realism in painting in the 19th century. As a cultural form, painting had never been a popular art since the production of religious icons in feudal

times. In the 19th century,'realism' in painting had achieved a brief period of popularity, especially in France, but this popularity had been cut short by the rise of photography as a means of dispersing visual images on a mass scale. After its displacement by photography, painting, when it did impinge upon people's lives, had certain demands made of it, the most important of which was that the image depicted be immediately recognisable and self-evidently of the world as it was then perceived. Thus Nazi painting displays a kind of stylistic populism which slotted into the popular notions of what 'art', and especially painting, were thought to be about. However, having 'selected' this style, the Nazis quickly began to run into problems. They had promised a cultural and spiritual revolution, but were unable to avail themselves of the revolution in form which was such a major characteristic of the 'non-realistic' modern movement. Thus their revolution quickly turned into a cultural restoration - its only vehicle being a mode of painting which was already in decline by the end of the 19th century. I do not want to convey the impression of a conscious searching around for a suitable painting style - this cultural restoration was simply the aesthetic equivalent of the inability of the Nazi revolution to abolish the bourgeois mode of production which they claimed to have superceded.

The art was a restoration because the type of painting chosen to carry the 'revolutionary' message of National Socialism was, by the turn of the century, already a defunct and exhausted cultural mode. It was the fag end of the great wave of realism which had dominated a large part of progressive European painting

in the middle of the preceding century. At the outset, this version of realism had had a two-fold thrust. Firstly, it had attempted to be a simple mirror to the world and to 'show things as they really were'. At this stage there had been a rough approximation to photography, plus the carrying of an implicit critical stance towards the world. In showing the world as it really was, there was the desire to portray people and situations stripped of idealism and sentimentality. However, in Germany this critical impulse quickly ran out of steam: the critical edge was lost and romantic idealism began to creep back in again. Here the Socialist Realist critics are quite correct when they say that it gradually lost its grip on the totality, and that what was to take its place was merely the sentimentalisation of the fragments of a shattered world. The final result was that, by the early twentieth century, this sentimental genre painting became almost indistinguishable from the corrupt art of the Academy which it had set out to displace:

> "Round about 1900 all possible subjects had been painted ... this genre painting had quite arbitrarily portrayed everyday life, and had extracted details from this arbitrariness. Animal pictures, pictures about sport, about a village, about a deer; even art itself was painted; architecture, both inside and outside. Runge had painted poems, the tourists were followed into the mountains, workers into the factories, the children into school, the travellers into the Orient. Every theme had been exhausted.The sea had liberated itself from the landscape, the boats from the sea, the waves from the sea, and in one of Leibl's paintings the girl from the bra." (6)

And yet it was precisely this deflated genre painting that was to be taken up by the Nazis and given the status of the 'new' revolutionary German art. Why? It happened, I think, for two

reasons. Firstly, as I mentioned earlier, what strikes one immediately about Nazi painting is its total lack of 'subjectivity'. There appears to be no working up by the individual artist of the elements of reality into an idiosyncratic vision. The painting seems to be trying to inhabit a completely public and communal universe. I want to deal with this at greater length, but it is worth noting at this point that, in however distorted a manner, Nazi culture did aspire to break with an art based exclusively on private visions - the sort of art which still clung to the romantic image of the lonely artist working in isolation. There was an attempt to enter a genuinely communal realm where public vision would displace private subjectivity. In its one-sided resolution of the public/private dilemma, it stood in direct opposition to the assumptions of modernism. Its answer was to adopt a form of painting that would be immediately accessible to the mass of the population, and, at the same time, render the new communality visible to them. The second reason for its adoption lies in the fact that they chose a type of painting in which content was restored to its primacy over form or style. The paintings directed themselves to rendering images of what was tangible and recognisable, and this was based upon the Nazi's need to locate a metaphor to encapsulate their new sense of German communality.

Thus we have arrived at a point where we can begin to map out a typology of depiction for the category of Nazi painting. Above all, it will have to be a typology which uses content as the main axis for the division of the paintings, since it lifted almost directly the main content divisions which had characterised

late 19th century German genre painting. In this situation, painting becomes structured in terms of the topics and themes which the pictures depict, and, of course, there was again a certain amount of 'political work' performed by such a structuring. By being of-the-world in such an immediate phenomenal sense, it was an easy step for the artists to rework that world into its required ideological image. The rigorous subdivision of this 'revolution of content' had, implicit within it, a corresponding structuring and subdivision of the reality it set out to depict. The world becomes a secure place to live in; it is held steady by this parallel ordering of the content. Thus a kind of counterfeit legitimacy is injected into the world and, above all, to man's place in it. But, over and above this, there was another advantage which genre painting conferred on the Nazis. By the end of the century, genre realism had shed its critical inheritance and had once again begun to sentimentalise its subject with a kind of late Romantic glow. This was to prove ideal for the Nazis, who had erected an aesthetic ideology which elevated art into the realm of the eternal and the spiritual. This process of elevation was already well under way in genre art, with men and landscapes gradually becoming cyphers for this transcendent spiritual realm, mere symbols of a higher order of reality. Thus it only needed a small push for this type of art to transform the contemporary reality of Germany into a symbol of the eternal. In this way, Nazi society and its dominant ideological types were turned into moments of a natural, racial order which simply <u>was</u>. This leads to the last general point that I want to make before we analyse the paintings more closely, and this is that there was not, and never could be, any stylistic development or change. The style itself partook of

this naturalness: all that could develop were themes in line with the changing direction taken by Nazi society. Thus it is possible to trace an increase in the occurence of militaristic themes towards the close of the period under discussion as the preparations for war were stepped up. Again it must be emphasised that only rarely was this a question of conscious manipulation, but was rather a function of the Nazis' inability to control the overall trajectory of their society.

I have broken down Nazi painting into a number of categories, each of which is determined by the topics and themes dealt with:

(i) Rural/Artisan paintings: here I have included not only the 'typical' characters in 'typical situations' kind of painting, but also the flood of landscape and animal paintings, since they all focused on the primacy of the rural scene in the overall scope of Nazi art;

(ii) those paintings which employ a kind of neo-classical iconography;

(iii) the representations of industrial workers and of large-scale industry generally;

(iv) the depiction of women - almost overwhelmingly of women in the nude.

In each of these categories I have attempted to relate the pictures to the general structure of Nazi ideology, and also to spell out some of the connections between the images used and the more general features of Nazi society.

The Rural/Artisan Pictures

From our earlier discussion it will now be clear that one focus of Nazi aesthetic thinking was what I have called the volkisch image. Here the ideological aim was to depict the Nazi revolution as one which was directing Germany along a pre-industrial path, where the mode of production would be based on a regenerated peasantry and artisan class. Politically, this tendency had been defeated during the struggles of 1933-1934, but aesthetically the image of the volkisch community was allowed to persist and dominates the paintings of the 1934-1939 period. Pictures in which either peasants or artisans were depicted made up about 25% of the total paintings exhibited at the 'Great German Art Exhibitions', held each year in Munich after 1937. If one also includes landscape and animal paintings, then this percentage becomes much higher. So even if the volkisch ideology had ceased to have any practical implications for the direction taken by Nazi society, it was to continue to play a crucial role as one of the dominant self-images of this society after 1933. The reason for this must, above all else, lie in the fact that it was this image which was capable of gaining a level of generality for many sections of German society. Although the peasant and artisan classes made up only a small percentage of the total population - (in fact, they continued to shrink in size after the Nazi takeover) - it was in the rural/artisan image that there was to be found a general metaphor for dignified, non-alienated labour. It became a symbol of what the Nazi revolution had promised, but had failed to deliver. In addition, it was an image in which there was the perfect ideological 'fit' that we mentioned earlier. Of course, there was another reason

why this image was adopted so readily: the peasantry and artisan groups had provided the bedrock of the Nazi party as well as its voting constituency, and these pictures are almost all soaked in the sentimentalisation and idealisation of the social milieu of these two groups.

(illustration No. 17 & 18).

In the painting 'The Shoemaker', by Adolf Wissel, the artisan is depicted as being a self-sufficient unit, making his way in the world solely by the skill invested in his hands and by the manipulation of the tools of his trade. He becomes a paradigm for meaningful labour and a symbol of what the Nazi revolution was aiming for on a mass scale. In Werner Peiner's 'Deutscher Erder' (1932), both the landscape and the men working in it undergo an intense spiritualisation and romanticisation. Here the peasant has been given a superior metaphysical status to every other type of labour, and is depicted as being somehow 'earthier', closer to the basic reality underlying all human action. He is to be contrasted with the anomic urban masses, cut off from both their own and Germany's real nature. In this way, the peasant becomes a model for everyone. He alone does not have to struggle since he is already in a condition of spiritual grace. It must be noted that in these pictures individuals are rarely portrayed qua individuals, with their own particular life histories, but are immediately elevated to a general symbolic level. Hence the frequency of such titles as 'Der Schlosser', 'Deutsche Erde', etc. This, again, is a general feature of Nazi painting, in which there is a 'hierarchy of concreteness' moving as follows:

idealised types ⟶ general title ⟶ symbolic generality ⟶ participation in the volkisch community. It is this which accounts for the quasi-religiosity of so many of the pictures, especially those in the rural category. (Illustration No: 19). These artisan/peasant paintings also partake of a spiritual naturalness, in that men, animals, simple craftsmen are constantly depicted as 'doing what comes naturally': they are all involved in the eternal round of the seasons, or are in contact with the earth, all of which is seen as the expression of a completely natural order. But this order has a covert political content in that it is to be taken as just one moment in the naturalness of life under Nazi rule. Men, horse, plough, furrow are merged into a self-evident unity and, as such, need no overt political justification. The political message is already implicit in this sacred unity, and it is the Nazis who have enabled it to come into being:

> "In such paintings, Leibl ... is without any overt social and propagandist intentions; to him the rural milieu is nature, it radiates and expresses a human nature which is resting in itself." (7)

This idealism of man and nature makes irrelevant those criticisms levelled at it by Socialist Realist critics that these pictures distort the reality in which they are set and, therefore, forfeit the right to be called realist. The Nazis never saw art as primarily the signifier of reality 'as-it-was', but rather as inhabiting the realm of the spirit and the ideal, where such contradictions cease. In fact, on closer inspection, many of these paintings are much closer to the conception of art held by the Socialist Realists than might at first sight be

imagined. For instance, the radical rhetoric of the early phase of Nazi ideology did find expression in a few paintings. Apart from the obvious anti-semitic references in the figures of the two landgrabbers in 'Robbed of House and Home' by Adolph Reich (Illustration No:20 ), there is little to fault in this painting according to the canons of Socialist Realism. The critical edge is there, as is the attempt to portray one specific incident of misfortune in terms of the general social processes underlying this 'typical situation'. This is backed up by a Nazi version of the fundamental premise of the Social Realist aesthetic ie. the depiction of the individual character within the totality of his social relationships:

> "It would be a limitation to just depict individuals in our paintings; therefore our artists are eager to show the German man in the middle of his social and material conditions. This must mean in the framework of his family, in communal work, together with his animals .... " (8)

Since the peasantry inhabit an eternal realm, it follows that there must also be a standard, timeless and unhistorical quality about the paintings, such as Wissel's 'Farmer's Family from Kahlenberg' (Illustration No:21 ), which depict them. Thus any contemporary references are glossed over. Work is on the land and with animals. There is no machinery present, no tractors, and all architecture is in the regional styles so beloved of the volkisch tendency. Since they have achieved the perfect state of non-alienation, everyone glows with health and seems never to experience poverty. The obvious question at this point is that, if these paintings were in such opposition to

the reality of the people depicted in them, why did they not 'see through them'? The answer to this must be that they were not primarily intended for the rural peasantry, but for the urban masses. These paintings are not the products of the peasantry, are not 'folk art' in the English sense of the term, but are rather an urbanite, idealised view of what rural life is like. This is precisely why there is this lack of 'reality': they were never intended as accurate pictures of rural life, and it is exactly in their unreality that the secret of their popularity lies. They were a general metaphor for an ideal way of life, held by large sections of the non-rural population - (folk clubs have always flourished in large cities). Thus, despite the lingering influence of the volkisch tendency, they should not be read literally as implying a widespread desire for a return to a pre-industrial mode of existence. These images of the good life set in the countryside are the property of those living in cities, and provide a resolution point for their anxieties about their present reality. They portray a world which was secure and harmonious, where work had meaning and dignity, and where the conflicts between labour and capital, man and nature, and the generations, were resolved. Thus, again, they can be seen to conform with the slogan 'Art for the People', but they resolutely remain not 'of the people'. These rural paintings are a refracting glass for the urban supporters of Nazism in which the promised land could be glimpsed and imagined. The problem was that this promised land did not arrive. Rural

depopulation continued; small farmers were swallowed up by the large estates; and there was no general return to the land for the urban masses. For anyone remaining in opposition to the real direction taken by Nazi society, there remained a chilling alternative:

> "We farmers must learn in the new state and in the economic epoch which is to come, that we are there for the common good; those who will not learn this lesson in the next few years can be taught the correct attitude to this common good in the more beautiful areas of Bavaria ie. Dachau." (9)

## The Classical Allegory

> "The unearthing and the measurement of classical monuments ... all this threw a garment of aesthetic decency over the tyrannies and debaucheries of the ruling powers."
>
> Lewis Mumford (10)

In the earlier section dealing with architecture, I tried to link the gradual domination of a neo-classical style of building with a parallel domination of Nazi society by the institution of the state. I suggested that the Nazi state had originally posited itself as the mediator of the interests of the petit-bourgeoisie, but had in fact discarded this role and achieved a high degree of autonomy from its social base. This autonomy had led to the triumph of a statist ideology over that of the volkisch tendency. A similar process was at work in painting, but here the conflict is much more muted and disguised. All that one can say is that, corresponding to the rise of the Nazi state, one can see an increasing use of neo-classical imagery.

But this was always used alongside the image of a volkisch paradise. The overtly public and communal nature of architecture necessitated the more speedy adoption of a definite line on style than was the case with painting. Again, as with architecture, it must be emphasised that in matters of taste the Ministry of Propaganda were always drawing from an already constituted pool of themes and imagery which had been in existence from the outset:

> "Goebbels and his team tended to understand and use the ideology as an instrument of domination, the content of which could be manipulated at will." (11)

In the rural/artisan paintings, the aspiration towards universalism had been achieved by the elevation of a particular class-fragment and its mode of work into a paradigm for the whole nation. In the case of the use of classical imagery, the state was attempting to find an iconography that would allow it to clothe itself in the appearance of general values. This in its turn must be seen as part of its wider problem, that of finding a mode of representation beyond the simple mediation of the interests of the peasantry and the small craftsmen. It was for this reason that it turned to the adoption of a classical iconography, and especially the resuscitation of the classical allegory. This painting ensemble, like that of the genre painting, was a decrepit form long since exhausted. Again we must speak of a cultural <u>restoration</u> rather than a cultural <u>revolution.</u>

By the time that the Nazis came to pick up neo-classicism as

a mode in painting and sculpture, it was beginning to look distinctly threadbare. As with genre painting, the Nazis attempted to breathe new life into a decadent form, trying to make it perform a number of important tasks in the range of self-images which German society constructed for itself after 1933. The reasons for this are, as with the artisan pictures, very varied. First, there was Hitler's penchant for regarding his creation as the Sparta of the North and, given that his personal tastes had to some extent become synonomous with the tastes of the Nazi state, this must be seen as an important factor in its resuscitation. Alternately, neo-classical imagery was made to represent the ideal of beauty, usually feminine and nude; the ideal worker; the ideal citizen; and the ideal warrior. The physicality and the nudity of the classical figure was refracted through the ideology of a racially-pure community to produce a typology of exemplary types. Unfortunately, the German citizen with his clothes off became a hybrid of Adonis and Mr. Universe.

In Kamps' 'Venus and Adonis' (1933), (Illustration No:22 ), the ideal of racial purity has been combined with the image of the ideal warrior, while in Saliger's 'The Judgement of Paris' (Illustration No: 23) 'ideal' feminine beauty bizarrely confronts the 'ideal' citizen. If it were not for the horrors inflicted in the pursuit of this ideal racial community, it would be hard to control one's mirth at these awkward attempts at synthesis. In each case, the golden rule in handling the neo-classical allegory is broken: the pictorial 'dream'

is interrupted by contemporary references. In both examples, realistic elements intrude into what had always been a symbolic language of an idealised realm. In the first painting the dream is punctuated by the austere 1930's haircut, whilst in the second painting the lederhosen of the Hitler Youth perform a similar deflationary function. In both these examples it is clear that neo-classicism is no longer a viable vehicle for the state's representation of itself as a general institution. The mass origin and nature of National Socialist society can no longer be disguised in the form of nymphs and warriors.

A second aspect of the 'work' performed by these paintings is as examples of political anthropology. Here it becomes difficult to pin down whether these ideal images of physical and racial types are intended to stand as direct portrayals of Aryans already in existence, or whether they are intended simply as signposts for the German population to get breeding and produce actual specimens. Certainly these paintings were effective only among those sections of Nazi society which took these breeding policies seriously ie. the S.S. As the decade progressed, the percentage of such works produced began to grow and is symptomatic of the increasing isolation of the Nazi state and its domination by those sections which were working for the realisation of the racial aspect of Nazi ideology. During the latter half of the thirties, as the preparations for war got increasingly under way, the depiction of the ideal physical type became transformed into the depiction of the ideal warrior, eg. the Wehrmacht in the nude. Parallel to this, there was a tendency for these neo-classical

nudes to become transformed into social types, simply by clothing them in the garments of their work (Illustration No:24 ). As the nation was exhorted to steel itself and display self-sacrifice, the use of neo-classical imagery came to reflect this emphasis. Roman austerity finally triumphed over Greek sensuality.

The Worker As Hero

> "The barriers have fallen ... the poison has been drawn from the atmosphere ... the community of the people in which brother respects brother ... has opened the way to a new 'workers art'."
>
> Rosenberg (12)

Any attempt to depict the working-class, or for that matter the process of large-scale industrial production, was fraught with pitfalls and anxiety for the Nazis, and they were at all times fully conscious of this. The difficulty lay in a number of areas. Firstly, there was the experience which the German working-class had undergone both during and after the rise to power of the Nazis. Secondly, there was the problem caused by the very nature of the National Socialist ideology. Finally, there were the added complications arising from the historical class nature of painting itself. I will try to deal with the repercussions which each of these areas had for the Nazis in their attempt to aesthetically incorporate the working-class into the 'new order'.

Having gained power by destroying the institutions of the working-class and by eliminating their political representatives,

there remained the problem of what to do with them, since it was unlikely that they would simply go away or undergo the kind of social transformation which the volkisch tendency would have liked. Whilst it is certainly not true that no members of the working-class had supported the Nazis prior to 1933, or that they did not receive some support from this class after 1933, it is the case that as a class, the German proletariat never formed a major part of the Nazi constituency. Again, although it is difficult to substantiate in detail, it is clear that Nazi ideology was unable to penetrate and shape the everyday life of the working-class after 1933 - (in terms of culture, it is known that Goebbels sent out requests for the production of more 'fantasy' literature and entertainment cinema, in order to combat the drop in book purchase and cinema attendance. Illusion had to supplement the purely political work which had dominated these two media since the arrival of the Nazis). One thing is clear, however: some compensations had to be offered to the working-class for their loss of political power; they had to be contained in some way if the state was to continue to rely on, and exploit, their labour. This containment, in the period under discussion, was not achieved solely by the use of terror, but rather was done by a combination of rising wages - ("hourly earnings in industry rose by 25% between 1933-45." (13)); full employment; and the provision of a wide range of consumer goods and cheap holidays through the schemes run by the D.A.F. In this way both entry into, and membership of, the national community by the working-class could be claimed by the Nazis with something like a straight face. At a guess, I would say

that a form of sullen resentment was raised to something of an art-form by the German working-class during the period under analysis.

The second area of difficulty lay in the nature of the National Socialist ideology itself. The Nazis had gained power by using an overtly anti-working class political rhetoric. It would be an easy task to assemble any number of quotations made by the Nazi leadership during their pre-power days which were downright abusive of the working-class. At best, the industrial proletariat were seen as misguided children, lost in the labyrinth of the Marxist city: at worst, they were a corrupt menace to the soul of the nation. Thus the Nazis were caught in a contradiction: on the one hand they remained totally reliant on the labour power which this class could deliver, while on the other hand they lacked a 'safe' ideological category by which to intergrate them into the fabric of Nazi society. In contrast to the deafening rhetoric poured out on the small landowners and artisans, the Nazis maintained an awkward silence on the problems of the German working-class.

Artistically, and especially within the medium of painting, this reticence was compounded by the fact that, as a cultural medium, painting had never been <u>of</u> the working class. In fact, it was a medium which the working-class had rarely, if ever, participated in or contributed towards. The working-class had had depictions of itself created in this medium ie. the tradition

of 19th century realism, but as a class it had rarely utilised painting. Thus, within the category of those paintings which dealt with the industrial working-class, the Nazis were attempting to make general both the content of the paintings and the medium itself, and, as I hope to demonstrate, they were unable to escape from the general cultural problematic implied in the slogan 'Workers Art'.

The most immediate manifestation of the difficulty which they encountered in the representation of the working-class can be seen in the percentage of pictures devoted, however remotely, to them in the 'Great German Art Exhibitions'. This oscillated between 2% and 5% and, considering that the working-class formed the overwhelming bulk of the population, it is symptomatic of a deep disquiet among the Nazis about this whole area. In the peasant/artisan paintings and, to a lesser degree, in the neo-classical paintings, they had symbolically created general anthropological types which were intended to be applicable to the whole of society. The problem for them then was how, having created an ideal type of man based on the peasant and the artisan, could they do the same thing using the industrial labourer as an archetype. This in itself was just one facet of the general problem confronting the Nazis after 1933, namely how could they appear as the true bearers of the interests of the German proletariat? I want to suggest that they attempted to do this by a combination of techniques, and it must be said that they never really achieved much success in this field. Firstly, they resorted to using the cultural forms of the

bourgeois state ie. they took over the 'general' language which this institution had appropriated for itself. Secondly, they imposed a kind of cultural and social isolation on these paintings. This overall ambiguity in the face of the German proletariat can be seen in the following two quotations:

> "In the factories, lawless proletarians were again made into human beings with the values of personality. Giant organisations came into being which were given great tasks, such that the artist was able to find a true El dorado of material that was only waiting to be shaped." (14)

> "Don't be misled by the wording of our public posters. It is true that there are such slogans as 'Down with the capitalists, the Jews, etc.' but they are absolutely necessary, for we will not reach our goal if we gather only under the slogans of German nationalism, or just nationalism. We must therefore speak the language of the embittered socialistic worker in order to get him on our side, otherwise they would not feel at home with us." (15)

Thus, in those pictures which do occur depicting the working-class, there is the constant stressing of such themes as co-operation and 'the common good'. This, in itself, is a significant shift in content from the rural/artisan paintings, where individuals are depicted as self-sufficient and where the 'common good' is already implicit in the 'naturalness' of the environment in which the scenes are staged. For the working-class, this 'common good' had to be spelt out both symbolically - (in the elevation of the worker to membership of the national community); and also naturalistically - (they literally had to be made aware that such an entity existed). The reason for this was that it was precisely in its relationship with the German working-class that the shortcomings of the Nazi revolution were directly revealed. (Illustration No:25 ) - this painting of 'Die Werksoldaten' by F.Staeger,(1938), should be compared with the artisan/peasant pictures used earlier.

I want now to deal with some examples of this type of painting in order to show the main ways in which Nazi painting tackled the problem of depicting the working-class and the industrial labour process.

(i) Industrial Landscapes: (Illustration No:26 ). This type of painting was the safest way for the Nazis to deal with the problem of the industrial working class. Firstly, such depictions of factory landscapes had become a legitimate topic within late 19th century genre painting. These industrial landscapes were the final gasp of the realist tradition which had seen as its task the depiction of reality 'as-it-really-was'. The critical element implicit in that slogan had almost completely vanished in such landscapes as Domnich's 'Winter Night Above Koenigshutte': all that remains is the object of the painting ie. the factory. Again, all we are left with in these industrial landscapes is the abstract technical process which takes place in the factories, plus the surface appearance of machinery. The human labour implicit in such complexes is either left out or ignored. Thus factories appear either to be operating at full blast, seemingly without the help of human beings, or they display a strangely deserted air in which the work force is apparently out on strike. In the case of both 'Winter Night Above Koenigshutte' and

'Freibstoffwerke im Bau, G.D.K.' by R.Gessner, (1941), (Illustration No: 27 ), there is hardly a proletarian in sight, with the factories appearing to have sprung into life fully formed. This 'naturalism' of origin was often complemented by titles in which the industry in question was denoted as just another aspect of Germany's renewed greatness, for instance pictures of blast furnaces would be titled 'From the Forge of the Reich'. Either way, the paintings repeatedly skate over the tricky problem of who actually worked in them.

(ii) Monumentalisation: this tendency within Nazi art is really a sub-category of the neo-classical mode, since the workers are usually depicted as muscular ancient Greeks with working clothes added, as in A. Kampf's 'Walzwerk' (Illustration No:24 ). This type of painting, (plus an important series of sculptures), aims at aesthetically depicting the worker as a useful member of the national community. He is shown in heroic situations of a social nature, and is always cast on a massive scale in order to stress symbolically his final intergration into the 'great national tasks' which lay ahead of the German proletariat. Tamed and crushed, he is now ready to undergo the full treatment of Nazi flattery and be admitted into the company of the great:

"Only the Third Reich created the real monuments

> to labour. In the old days monuments were for counts, great statesmen, artists and inventors, but the worker was never represented in this select crowd. But the Third Reich will create the greatest monument to labour." (16)

However, it always remained a purely symbolic elevation; the working-class were simply being given a seat at the aesthetic table, and this in no way implied a policy of attack upon the economic forms under which they laboured. In fact, in all these paintings, the industrial labourer is never given the status of a general paradigm. He never becomes a model for the whole of society; rather the paintings are talking back to the working-class and attempting to portray the illusion of intergration, solely for their own benefit. They have the unease of those trying to reassure a condemned man. They are never directed outwards to Nazi society as a whole. Again these works correspond to the political relationship between the Nazi state and the working-class. They are monuments erected to the worker by the cultural bureaucracy, but they do not come from him. Hence their eager tone with regard to what 'we' are going to do for 'labour'.

(iii) The Worker As Artisan: in this type of depiction the proletarian's membership of his class is simply denied. In Sohn-Skuwa's 1937 painting 'Mortel und Stein' (Illustration No:28 ), the bricklayer is

transformed into the image of the ideal artisan. He is depicted as a self-sufficient and solitary worker, with the emphasis of the picture being placed upon the skill in his hands and the symbolic implication of the tools of his trade ie. he is a craftsman. He has become the equivalent of the 'Shoemaker' (Illustration No: 17 ), and is thus separated from the values and experience of his class. It is useful to compare this tendency to transform the worker into a solitary artisan, with the depiction of the working-class as a naturally communal work unit as in illustration no. 25.

The Image of Beauty: Women in Nazi Paintings

> "Coming home from the front, they the troops have a physical need to forget all the filth by admiring beautiful women."
>
> Hitler (17)

> "Fascist art displays a utopian aesthetic - that of physical perfection. Painters and sculptors under the Nazis often depicted the nude, but they were forbidden to show any bodily imperfections. Their nudes look like pictures in male health magazines: pin ups which are both sanctimoniously asexual and (in a technical sense) pornographic, for they have the perfection of a fantasy."
>
> S. Sontag (18)

I have not attempted in this section to give an exhaustive account of the ways in which women were depicted in Nazi painting. What I want to do is to pick out certain features from the general depictions of the female, to illustrate further the central point I have been trying to make throughout this section on painting. Nazi art presents what, on the surface, appears to

be two contrary depictions of German womanhood. First there are the 'heroic' depictions of the ideal Aryan woman, usually resplendent with blonde hair and a child at her breast. Against this tendency must be set the masses of semi-pornographic nudes, usually painted in the decadent style of the 'naughty nineties' (Illustrations No: 29 ). Diebitsch's 'Mutter und Kind' is typical of a whole series of pictures that were produced by Nazi artists. Often they had titles such as 'Guardian of the Species' and 'Mother of the Reich', and directly reflected Nazi ideology which, in theory at least, placed the woman firmly in the home. In this analysis of Nazi painting,I have deliberately tried to avoid any position which relied, even in part, on any brand of conspiracy theory. However, in the case of the depiction of women, the contradictions both within the ideological formulations, and in the relation of this ideology to the reality of women under the National Socialists, become so glaring that one is tempted to resort to a notion of a conscious manipulation of this ideology.

Throughout the whole of the period of Nazi rule, women's labour was utilised, both in public works and on the land, on a large scale. Admittedly, even at the height of the war, there was a reluctance by the Nazi leadership to exploit fully the labour power of women, but the situation never came anywhere near corresponding to the'Kirche, Kind , Küche' element in Nazi ideology. Yet this myth remained one of the strongest elements in the Nazi pantheon:

> "There is no place for the political woman in the ideological world of National Socialism ... The intellectual attitude of the movement on this score is opposed to the political woman. It refers the woman back to her nature-given sphere

> of the family and to her tasks as a wife. The post-war phenomenon of the political woman, who rarely cuts a good figure in parliamentary debates, signifies robbing woman of her dignity. The German resurrection is a male event." (19)

Thus German womanhood was to be returned to her 'natural' milieu but, like the repatriation programme intended for the 'lawless proletarians', it remained an unrealised project. Often the Nazis made an advantage of their puritanical sterness towards women by contrasting it with the 'effete' muddling of the sexes which had taken place during Weimar. The public image of women, depicted to the German people by such paintings as 'Muter und Kind', attracted around it a mountain of stalwart adjectives:

> "audacity and pride, circumspection and reserve, earnestness, resolution, integrity, loyalty - these are the qualities which can be perceived in the face of a typical Nordic German such as this." (20)

Why then was there such a flood of titillating nudes, even to the extent of adorning the mantlepiece of the ascetic Fuhrer? (Illustration No:30 ). Part of the answer lies in who the nudes were painted for. They were largely commissioned by, and intended for, the elite of the Nazi party and of German society. The paintings reflected their privileged position within the society and were closely related to the changes which had taken place within the movement since the taking of power. As we have already seen, after the 'heroic' phase of struggle was over, the Nazi state achieved an unparalleled concentration of political and economic power. The ideology, and, therefore, also the paintings, continued to proclaim the virtues which had been prized during this period - hence the depiction of women as hard-working mothers supporting the party

stalwarts. But the increasing domination and isolation of the state apparatus and the party elite, led to the development of a rigid hierarchy, not only within the nation, but within the party as well. Those at the top of this apparatus had immense power and, also, the economic privileges which went with it. We have already seen how Speer, looking back over his career as the Reich's chief architect, referred to his design for Goering's Berlin palace as "blatant nouveau-riche architecture of prestige". The rapid 'embourgeoisement' of the party elite was reflected in its increasing taste for luxury - (despite Hitler's noted asceticism). It is this, I think, which lies behind the desire to possess paintings of nude women, since they were the classic late 19th century symbol of having 'made it'. As one commentator has noted, the majority of the Nazi elite were growing up at precisely the time when these types of painting were so fashionable. In the privacy of their homes and offices the Nietzschean Superman proved to have the taste of inflated shopkeepers. A final ironic comment on their 'revolution'.

* * * * *

# CHAPTER VII

## RALLIES AND FESTIVALS

> "But you want to know the nature of these festivals and what is shown there: nothing, if you will. Wherever liberty and affluence reign there is the seat of true happiness. You may plant the maypole in the middle of the square, and crown it with flowers; let the people be assembled round, and this shall be called a festival. You may do better still: let the spectators be exhibited as a show: let them be actors themselves; let each man see and love himself in others, to the end that they may all be the more intimately united."
>
> J-J. Rousseau: 'Lettre à d'Alembert' (1)

### Problems in Nazi Ideology

One of the most striking features of National Socialism is the contrast between its ideological traditionalism and the modernism of its technology and political life: in other words, the contrast between its ability to wage the most sophisticated warfare the world had so far seen, over and against its self-image as a feudalistic, pre-industrial society. In the sections on architecture and painting, I have attempted to lay bare the tension which this contradiction produced in both the form and the content of these cultural modes. In this final section, I want to widen the analysis in order to take in other areas of social life, and, especially, to try to intergrate more fully the material presented in the introduction. One of the initial impulses to embark upon this piece of research was to try to explain certain correspondences which I had noted between Nazi society and the early period of post-revolutionary Russia: to try to explain

certain parallels that I found between the Russian avant-garde and the art of Nazism. Whilst the 'totalitarian' debate had constantly pointed out the similarities between Stalinism and Nazism eg. Socialist Realism/Nazi Realism, Soviet Baroque/Nazi Baroque in architecture, these correspondences with the pre-Stalinist phase of the Russian revolution have always been overlooked.

The constrast between the Nazis ideological traditionalism and their political modernism, largely accounts for the fact that, while Nazi painting had been consigned to oblivion, the style of Nazi politics and their general mode of domination has achieved an almost mythical status. It has even generated a series of clichès about Nazism in the popular consciousness of the West - such comments as "the Nazi system derived from the demonic power of Hitler's oratory", or the shudder of admiration/repulsion which is commonly felt as the audience emerge from a viewing of Reifenstahl's 'Triumph of the Will'. However, there has been little serious analysis of the style of Nazi politics and the organisation of their political spectacle. What analysis there is tends to restrict itself to simply pointing out the epiphenomenal nature of these elements within the more fundamental development of Nazism (2). But the nature of the political spectacle seems to me to raise vital questions about the essential nature of Nazism, and is the point where our central problematic begins to manifest itself. Whilst the paintings remain flat and awkward, the wheeling formations on the Zeppelin field gave the Nazis an enduring form and image for their society. It is to

the answering of why this should be the case that this final section of the thesis addresses itself.

Far from being a monolithic, coherent bloc, Nazi ideology was not only contradictory and muddled, but was differentially distributed over the various sections of Nazi society, with each section producing a different set of emphases and variants of this ideology. In a recent analysis, Poulantzas (3) has attempted to set up a global explanation of Fascist ideology, based upon the nature of petit-bourgeois consciousness in periods of economic and political crisis. Thus the often contradictory elements within Fascist ideology are represented as corresponding to the differing economic positions of the various groups of the petit-bourgeoisie which went to make up the central component of the Fascist constituency. While there is much that is valuable in this to explain the attraction of Fascism for this group, the analysis lacks a dynamic element, since economic variations are elevated in a simplistic manner to explain varying ideological focii. It is the case, however, that many elements of fascist ideology were derived from the developmental logic which a successful Fascist movement finds itself in: that is, the gulf which emerges between its original intentions and what it actually does. A more fruitful line of analysis would seem to be the contrast between:

(i) Fascism/Nazism as a movement - a party;

(ii) Fascism/Nazism in power - a state.

Nazism as a Movement

One of the crucial defining features of Nazism as a movement was that it developed, and gained power, within the context of a breakdown in the workings of liberal capitalism. The deepening of this general crisis with the economic recession of 1929, led to the Nazis increasingly emphasising that they were the party which could (a) cure this crisis; and (b) go beyond the form of society which was responsible for the crisis. The context in which these claims could have some kind of credence was one in which there had been a failure in the market mechanisms and in the general conditions which ensured capital's continuing accumulation. This economic distress was to be paralleled on a political level in that the traditional ruling groups within Germany had found it increasingly difficult to guarantee the continuation of such conditions inside the political forms of the Weimar Republic. Their response to this situation, even before the Nazis' seizure of power, had been to adopt a quasi-authoritarian solution, in the form of rule by cabinet decree. There would seem to be at least some degree of coherence in Marxist analyses of National Socialism in that, as the political forms of Weimar became increasingly irrelevant to the curing of this situation, the Nazis were able to recruit, and rely on in times of election, the petit bourgeoisie, combined with certain sections of the middle-class. Thus, at this stage, the Nazi economic and social programme was little more than a 'catalogue of petit-bourgeois greviances' which were generated in the face of a capitalism in deep trouble. But there were also components of an ideal nature, over and above this simple listing of direct

economic demands. The penetration of these ideal ideological elements among their constituency, allowed the Nazis to transform economic discontent into a form of 'radical' politics. They were able, as a movement, to unite their constituency into an autonomous mass movement in revolt against the capitalist system.

(1). It was autonomous because it lay between the socialist proletarian parties and the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie, and saw itself as an alternative to both. The key element in this was its ability to articulate and take advantage of the radicalisation and alienation of the middle-class from the traditional bourgeois and proletarian parties.

(2). It was a mass movement in that it was able to mobilise, either within the party or at elections, certain major groupings in German society. They were major in that they constituted a considerable portion of the population. However, they were a mass movement in another sense: they saw as their aim and object the encompassing of all the groups of society within their conception of a 'National Community'. In other words, they were after the total transformation of the whole of German society.

(3). They were a party of revolutionary intention. Throughout the thesis I have attempted to bring out those elements in the movement which were aimed

at destroying and replacing the whole structure of bourgeois capitalism. Thus, at the stage of being a movement in a pre-power situation, the Nazis represented, both in intention and function, a real revolt against the conditions of capitalism.

Nazism in Power

One of the major concerns of the recent work done on Nazism, and on Fascism in general, has been to try to understand why "where fascism succeeded, it did not carry out the interests of its followers" (4); why, when it gained power, it suppressed or eliminated those elements which had initially been in revolt against capitalism? - (in terms of our schema, what was it that happened during the transformation of the Nazi movement into the Nazi state?). The Marxist analyses conducted during the 30's tended to turn the success and subsequent development of fascism into a function of the money and continuing influence of big business. Thus, the totality of fascism becomes a manipulative screen behind which monopoly capitalism consciously set about ensuring the continuation of its markets and profits. However, in recent years, analyses have moved away from this conspiratorial theory to a more subtle and mediated type of explanation. In terms of the German experience, the nature of Nazi rule after 1933 would appear to have two interlinked aspects:

(1). The exact nature of the relationship between the Nazi elite and the economic ruling groups after 1933. How was the influence of these dominant

groups mediated, if at all, into Nazi policies, and how were the aims of such groups altered and deflected by the economic and political arena established by the Nazis?

(2). The effect which the unfolding of the 'logic of power' had, especially on the nature of the Nazi state and its total appropriation of the political forms, which, together with the high concentration of power in the hands of the leadership, enabled the state to gain an unprecedented independence from the rest of society.

The capture of power by the Nazis seems to have rested on the forging of an alliance between certain sections of large capital and the Nazi party elite. This came about because of the increasing inability of these ruling groups to ensure the maintenance in German civil society of the conditions for the reproduction of capital. This resulted in these groups handing over control of the political realm to the Nazis, but at the same time retaining their economic power. The intention of these groups seems to have been to allow the National Socialists, through the instruments of the state, to usher in a period of authoritarian rule, which would have guaranteed the continuation of capital accumulation. This alliance between big capital and the National Socialists was founded upon a number of promises made by the Nazis. They were to:

(i) guarantee the formation of a strong state;

(ii) attempt to overcome the economic crisis by a policy of rearmament;

(iii) embark on a policy of militarist expansionism;

(iv) smash the workers' movement and, at the same time, suppress the anti-capitalist elements within their own party.

Thus the state and its institutions were to be gained at the expense of precisely those elements in their own ranks who were in revolt against capitalism. The period 1933-35 was to see the banning and elimination of the 'revolutionary' elements. The major task of the Nazi state during this period became the creation of an administered economy based upon a strengthened state; with this went the dragooning of the middle-class supporters away from an ideology of disruption towards one which emphasised work and obedience. Therefore, in the period prior to 1936, the conspiratorial model would appear to have some basis. However, Mason (5) has documented how, during and after 1936, the consensus between big industry, the military, the civil service, and the party elite began to disintergrate. The immediate reason for this was the state's need to keep the working-class sweet by supplying an increasing amount of consumer goods and allowing wages to rise, which cut across the demands of industry and the military for plant and machinery to be assigned to the rearmament programme. The overall result was that the various groups within this consensus ceased to operate as an homogenous power bloc, allowing the Nazi state to pursue

and achieve policies with purely political ends, policies which were cut off from the 'rational' economic aims of the former ruling groups. Thus an independent state was able to set in motion its plans for the realisation of the 'racial-ethical' utopia, a utopia that was now shorn of its radical, mass content.

If this more dynamic type of analysis is retained, it will enable us to explain the presence of two conflicting societal images that were operating within the wider spectrum of Nazi ideology. These are:

(i) the volkisch-based imagery which was centred on the history/role of the party as an autonomous, mass-based movement in revolt against capitalism, and composed of a radicalised/alienated middle-class and petit-bourgeoisie. This imagery revolved around the notion of the regenerated Nazi society as being a pre-industrial, artisan-orientated community;

(ii) the image of Nazi society as a strong militaristic state, dominated by a ruling elite and characterised by a high concentration of personal power, plus 'a degree of independence ... unparalleled in History'.

Certainly, by 1936, the tension between these two contradictory notions of the nature of Nazi society had been 'resolved' by the elimination of the more 'leftist' elements, followed by the gradual subordination of the party as a movement to the authority of the state. But this mass base was never completely eliminated: it

still existed, albeit in an inferior position, and had to be contained and recognised - (in Benjamin's terms, given some 'means of expression'). In the earlier discussion concerning Nazi architecture, I tried to trace the conflict between the two societal images embodied in certain buildings - the Volkisch and the Baroque - and attempted to locate this division in the unresolvable tension between the party and the state. The argument so far has been an attempt to ground this ideological split in the real nature and structure of Nazi society. What follows is the extension of this argument into those areas which I have designated the 'spectacular' aspects of the society.

## The Nazi Spectacle

> "Unlike art, which in its aims is equally ideal, the festival realises in a more active manner the aesthetic transformation of reality."
> Mazaev (6)

By the term 'spectacular', I simply mean those areas within a society which are devoted to the organisation and projection of that society's self-image: that is, the way in which a complex stream of images and appearances is organised to create a quasi-coherent picture of the society in question, and which is intended for internal consumption. In our society the realm of the spectacular is based largely upon the circulation of commodities and their mode of appearance in the society. In Nazi society, however, the realm of the spectacular was almost completely political, and, above all, centred on the image which it had of itself as a unified, politically-aware, classless National Community. I have chosen three areas in which to try to analyse the nature and

the meaning of the Nazi spectacle and to bring out the real tensions which we have seen at work in the areas of painting and architecture. These areas are:

(i) the 'Das Thing' theatrical movement

(ii) the Mass Rally

(iii) the strong state 'fantasy'.

Again I must stress that I start from a position which does not see Nazi ideology as either a homogenous monolith or simply a manipulative/cynical conspiracy. It is still quite common to talk of 'Nazi Ideology' as if it were an undifferentiated thing. Not enough attention has been paid to the clash of societal images, to the false starts, sudden reversals, and 'marginal' projects that somehow quietly disappeared. As Kracauer has stated (7), it is precisely the unconscious nature of cultural 'trivia' which allows the observer to move to "the underlying meaning of an epoch". There is no one common set of determinants which are operating to produce a unified ideology. The area of art is particularly suited to such a study, since the political implications of artistic objects and projects are never immediately obvious. Thus sudden changes of direction in art, particularly those at the centre of a society's self-image, are particularly instructive in illustrating the tensions at work within that society.

DAS THING

One of the best examples of the way in which these 'marginal' projects allow one to glimpse "the underlying meaning of an epoch" is contained in the development, and eventual demise,

of the only 'specifically National Socialist form of expression', the Thing theatrical experiment. 'Thing' is the old Germanic word for an assembly of free men, and certainly in some of its manifestations, particularly its attempts to recreate the ancient assemblies of the Teutons, it came to occupy a place midway between the tradition of art as objectified representation and art as a species of active, symbolic politics. There had been a number of precedents for this type of theatrical production, beginning in 1907 with Ernst Wachler's establishment of an open-air theatre in the Harz mountains. Wachler, a volkisch idealist, had used this amphitheatre, not to stage conventional thematic plays, but to re-enact modern reconstructions of ancient teutonic rituals. The Nazi interest in this type of theatre had got underway prior to their taking over power in 1933, but it was to reach a peak in 1934, only to be eventually phased out and officially closed down by Goebbels in 1937.

The aim of the 'Thing' experiment was to create a form of theatre that would be adequate for, and give expression to, the newly created 'Community of the People'. It was a movement that was self-consciously planned to go beyond the 'theatre of bourgeois privilege', and the original theorists of the movement were able to submit both the form and the function of conventional theatre to a series of articulate critiques. The attack they launched was to focus on the relation of this type of theatre to the traditional ruling groups of the society under capitalism. For instance, they criticised the fact that conventional theatre, both in the size and separation of its buildings, had been the 'plaything' of the small privileged groups who had constituted

its principal patrons. These buildings, and the sort of plays that were staged in them, were declared to be completely inadequate for the new audience that National Socialism had brought into being ie. the 'People' and the 'Nation'. Plans were, therefore, submitted for the construction of new theatres on completely fresh sites, which were especially designed to take account of the new theatrical form. Most of these sites were designed as open-air amphitheatres - (conforming to Wachler's original plans) - and each one was to be situated on a site which had some reference to Teutonic history eg. an old meeting ground or burial site. The intention was to recreate the spiritual and collective experience of the Teutonic ancestors within the new context of Nazism. A series of 400 of these theatres was planned, but only a handful were ever completed before the movement was stifled.

The 'plays' themselves, and the language and symbolism in which they were cast, relied heavily on a spiritual, quasi-religious set of values. Each element of the production - the plot, the settings and the audience - were designed to facilitate the realisation of the chief aim of the experiment, namely the fusion of players and audience into a 'collective holy experience', described by the protagonists of 'Das Thing' as 'the elevation from low to high Volk'. The first of these productions, staged in 1933, played initially only to very small audiences, but their popularity was to rise spectacularly so that, at the peak of their success, they were being presented to audiences of 20,000 to 50,000. The 'plots' of these productions ranged over a wide variety of subjects, but each

one always had as its central intention the merging of actors and audience into a passionate collective experience. The most common theme was the triumph of 'the good new days' over 'the bad old ones', or a depiction of the 'paradise on earth' which National Socialism had made a possibility. The theoretical underpinning was decidedly anti-naturalist, with both bourgeois and folk forms being rejected because of their inability to cope with the needs of a mass audience:

> "it bourgeois/folk theatre deflects ... away away from the desire of our path for tragic heroism and myth." (8)

The revolutionary characteristics of 'Das Thing' were to be contrasted with those of bourgeois theatre, and they make interesting reading since, despite the spiritual and nationalistic fog in which they are shrouded, they in many ways run parallel to the theories which lay behind the Russian Festivals and the theatre of Meyerhold:

"

| INDIVIDUALISTIC | CHORIC-VOLKIC |
|---|---|
| **Theatre** | |
| (1) The person | |
| Individual | Type |
| Solitary Soul | Community Soul |
| Personality | People (Volk) |
| Contemplation | Race |
| Piety | Ritual |
| (2) The Stage | |
| Closed | Open |
| Magic | Political-ritual |
| Night side | Day side |
| Mirroring | Shaping, community |
| Proscenium stage | Amphitheatre |

(3) The Performer

| | |
|---|---|
| Great men struggling with themselves | Heroes overcoming the enemy |
| Tragic actors | Players |
| Personalities | Types |
| Knowing | Being |
| Free | Leaders and Led |

(4) The Drama

| | |
|---|---|
| Conflicts | Struggles |
| Conversation | Chorus |
| Shaping | Rhythm |
| Harmony-discord | Polyphony |
| Closed form | Open form |

(5) Requisites

| | |
|---|---|
| Curtain | Signals |
| Painted sets | Plastic (movement) |
| Back drop | Symbol |
| Costumes | Weapons and uniforms |
| Illusion | Reality |

" (9)

The thematic content of these productions was, of course, very different from that of Meyerhold's 'plays', but the style of the staging, plus the similarity of the contrasts between 'bourgeois' and 'mass' theatre, have a great deal in common:

> "In addition to the obligatory apparatus of musical sound and lighting, effects were utilised. Loud speakers carried echo-effects in every direction, and the masses sang. There were processions and marches between, behind, in front of, all around the audience. A great levey of flags, emblems and uniforms drenched the arena in brown and red." (10)

By the end of 1935, the 'Thing' productions began to get much more exuberant and sensual, striving ever more furiously to reach an even greater intensity in mass festive union. For example, Michels, the propaganda chief for the Cologne region, wanted to put on a production that would use all the senses,

including that of smell. The planned production was to include the burning of herbs and plants so that their scents would waft over the audience:

> "For the nose, or rather the sense of smell, torches can be effectively used, but in addition use should be made of quite special plants and the conifers of the German forests. These last give off a beneficent and strengthening aroma when burnt in open dishes. Further, from the symbolic viewpoint, the souls of our German forefathers were imaginable from the Harz aromas, just as the burning of Juniper twigs could be understood as a sign of driving out all the evil spirits." (11)

Sensuality and festivity were in danger of gaining precedent over serious political propaganda, and these more exotic works were soon to be seen as a threat to a state- based ideology that was increasingly attempting to emphasise hard work and dutiful obedience. The result was that a memorandum was issued, which called for 'more restraint' with regard to an art-form that was"also an expression of state-political will" (12). The declaration by Hitler, after liquidating the S.A. leadership, that'the 'German revolution is over', resulted in the banning of any reference to 'revolution' in Thing productions.

This entire theatrical movement should be seen as an eruption of the radical mass-following that National Socialism had called into being in its striving for political power, and, in the domain of art, its implications for the traditional forms of artistic representation were as threatening as those which had cropped up in the first years of the Russian revolution. The Thing experiment did not fall apart because of the recurrence of bad weather or because of the lousy acoustics, as has been suggested

by some commentators (Brenner, Grunberger): it failed because the Nazi state was beginning to assert its dominance over the National Socialist movement, gradually suppressing any of those elements which had carried over their pre-1933 radicalism. It needed to establish a tighter control over the people it had mobilised, and part of this desire for increased control was to be satisfied by giving them a much more highly structured and administered form of expression. It had to set up an arena in which the movement's solidarity could be paraded, where the self-image of a classless national community could become a reality, if only for a brief period. The 'Thing' experiment had not developed in this way: it had proved too chaotic, too prone to deviation from the strict path laid down by the State. As a result, it was quietly smothered, to be superceded by the State-administered mass rally. As one contemporary observer noted, the Reich party rally was 'the Thing idea become flesh and blood' (13).

## THE MASS RALLY

"Spatial images are the dream of a society."
Kracauer (14)

The rallies which were held each year at Nuremburg have become, for the post-1945 generations, the most enduring image of, and the key symbol for Nazi society. For these later generations these gatherings have come to represent a society which was able to combine ruthless efficiency with the most complete loss of individuality yet experienced by 20th century European man. As such, they are both hated and admired at one and the

same time. As one recent commentator has said:

> "What characterises Nazi art and the Nazi State is not so much its content but the unnerving efficiency of its presentation. (15)

What this particular observer is referring to is not the bland paintings exhibited each year in Munich, but rather the manipulation of emblems and symbols throughout the length and breadth of Nazi society, and especially during the mass parades of the parteitag. Even today,the spectacular image that the Nazis constructed of their society exerts its desired effect, and yet this image of ruthless efficiency can hardly bear close examination if the bureaucratic war-of-all-against-all, which was systematically encouraged by Hitler, is understood. Of course the rallies did impress foreign visitors, and they certainly had a strong public relations element built into them, but primarily they were designed for internal consumption, and it is in the dynamics of Nazi society that their true meaning lies. The rallies were primarily an expressive exercise: after 1934 their actual political work was very limited.

Every description of the Parteitag emphasises the all-pervasive feeling of festivity and relaxation which seemed to grip Nuremberg during the week these events were staged. However, these rallies always differed from those which took place in Russia, in that the Nazis never self-consciously linked the changes taking place in the traditional aesthetic realm with their organisation of the political spectacle. One of the reasons for this was that they were still expecting a renascent German culture to appear in traditional forms ie. within the frame of the picture or the

proscenium stage of the theatre. If they did make any connections between cultural revolution and political spectacle, then it was only at an ironic, half-glimpsed level, such as illustrated by the preceding quotation concerning the equivalence between the party rally and the Thing theatre. The elements which would have made such links had been suppressed or liquidated with the disappearance of the artistic avant-garde. Moreover, the blinkered traditionalism of their aesthetic ideology guaranteed that they would never be able to understand rationally the real trajectory of the society they had created.

If we begin our analysis from the point of view that the main function of the rallies was to produce a self-image of Nazi society, then it becomes impossible to deal with them as past commentators have done. Both liberal and Marxist analysts have used variations of the argument that the rallies were either the supreme example of mass manipulation or the pinnacle of 'Fascist mysticism' (16).

> "At night the political leaders met in the Zeppelinweise for their annual ceremony. Dramatic lighting, flags, martial music, and slow marching were again used to mesmerise the masses." (17)

> "Fascism appeals to the lower instincts of crowds." (18)

My point is that a truer way to view these rallies is as a species of <u>administerd festival,</u> in which the various groups within Nazi society presented themselves before that society constituted as a whole. They were manipulative in the sense that the State retained overall control of their organisation,

but the dialectic always has two terms, in this case that of the State and the mass nature of Nazism as a movement, and they should not be viewed as a simple piece of one-way political cynicism, since this fails to relate them to the inner tensions of Nazi society. There would seem to be two aspects from which to approach the problem of the rallies: firstly, as an example of the interaction between the aesthetic and the political within a society that had been'invaded' by a mass-political movement;and secondly as the point at which the two major components of National Socialism - the State and the 'movement' - met each other, and where the tension between the two was neutralised and contained.

Firstly, the aesthetic/political dialectic. The Thing experiment provides us with a clear example of a Nazi art-form undergoing a fundamental reformulation under the impact of mass politics. The impetus for this reformulation came from the need to develop the traditional theatrical form in order to encompass the new social reality ie. 'the Community of the People'. I have already argued that the rallies must be located somewhere along a spectrum between the Thing and the expression of the State's ideology in the architectural projects initiated by Hitler. They (the rallies) are the clearest vindication of Benjamin's claim that Fascism aestheticises politics. However, the mode of aestheticisation present in the rallies is very different from that which occurs in the architectural fantasies. The rallies claimed to be a general form of expression for Nazi society

as a whole, and are the location of the spectacular appearance of the various groups which constituted National Socialism as a movement. It is an aestheticisation of politics, but of a politics which has become the expression of the mass. The themes and displays which were 'featured' at each year's meeting were centred upon one specific group ie. 'The Day of Labour', 'The Day of Youth', 'The Day of the Army'. Each group manifested itself as a social category, not as a collection of individuals, and it was as a social category that they acted out the expressive symbolic politics - (the creation of the 'mass ornament', as Kracauer called it) - which was central to the public activity at Nuremburg. Three types of mass activity utilised by the Nazis had echoes in the experiments conducted by the Russian avant-garde:

(1). The Mass Gymnastic Display. In their post-1933 form, the mass gymnastic displays organised by the Nazis had lost the ideological underpinning which was so characteristic of their Russian counterparts. Class content had been replaced by an openly nationalistic rhetoric, with the activities of the performers becoming hymns to the Aryan physique and to the health of the nation. Despite this, it is worth remembering the list of oppositional characteristics which were thought to be displayed by Thing theatre ie. 'drama-chorus-polyphony-open form', all qualities included by Meyerhold in his experiments in mass theatre. The aesthetic core of these mass displays were, of course, now contained within the ideology of the nation and the Fuhrer, but they still displayed the underlying link which the

encroachment of the aesthetic on the political had created:

> "There were present 18,000 members of the nation's military and semi-military organisations, in their uniforms of brown, black, dark blue, grey and green. The army, navy, airforce, Labour service, special guards, Hitler youth, political leaders and police were present ... from above, the mass of men and banners represented a huge tulip field" (19).

(Illustration No. 3I ).

(2). The Military Display. In Russia during the early period of the revolution, the display of military strength had always been intergrated, and made subordinate to, a general revolutionary socialist theory. Within the context of the Nuremburg rallies, this subordination of military might to politics had ceased, and militarism had become an end in itself, an autonomous value to be pursued over and above what critical element remained in the ideology:

> "all efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing, war." (20)

This reversal of the aesthetic/political dialectic within Nazi Germany must be contrasted with the experiments conducted by Mayakevsky, in which he used the Caspian fleet to construct 'symphonies'. Here military strength is redirected to both playful and political ends, whilst in the Nuremberg displays 'pure' destructiveness is simply given an aesthetic gloss ie. turned into another version of the mass ornament. The culmination of this trend would have been the planned construction of the Marzfeld, where up to 100,000 spectators would have been able to witness mock-battles staged by the Reichswehr.

(3). The Architecture of Light. One of the most dramatic effects devised by Speer to heighten the mystery surrounding the Nazi spectacle, was his 'cathedral of ice'. This consisted of ringing the Zeppelin field - (and many other Nazi spectaculars as well) - with search lights, their beams directed skywards. The holding of these emotional high spots at night beneath the gigantic beams of the lights, strengthened the feeling which the Rallies induced of a secret band of blood brothers uniting in communion:

> "The actual effect surpassed anything I had imagined. The 130 sharply defined beams, placed around the field at intervals of 40', were visible to a height of 20,000 to 25,000', after which they merged into a general glow.The feeling was of a vast room,with the beams serving as mighty pillars of infinitely higher walls. Now and then a clound moved through this wreath of lights, bringing an element of surrealistic surprise to the image. I imagine that this 'cathedral of ice' was the first luminescent architecture of this type." (21)

This 'painting with light' as a mode of mass expression, also had its parallels in the Russian experience - both post- and pre-Stalinist. Popova, the stage designer, in her plans for some of Meyerhold's spectacles, created a design which relied heavily upon the use of airships and the illumination of searchlights to pick out the socialist slogans which they were carrying. As with Speer, the beams were designed to provide an aerial frame for the activities on the ground (Illustrations No. 32 ). Leger, an avant-garde artist firmly within the socialist camp, had become fascinated with the idea that the architectural forms of his 'heroic' period of painting could, in fact, be realised within the context of the modern city:

> "During the first World War I used to spend my furloughs in Montparnasse where I happened to

> meet Trotsky and we often talked about the thrilling problem of a coloured city. He wanted me to go to Moscow: the idea of a blue street, a yellow street, aroused his enthusiasm." (22)
>
> "Leger then reveals that in 1937 he had proposed the following: the 300,000 unemployed in Paris were to be given the job of cleaning all its buildings;by day Paris would thus be pure white. At night, however, the entire city would be bathed in coloured light, the whitened buildings serving as screens for projectors, some of which would be stationary while others would be mounted on airplanes flying overhead." (23)

Again, the point that I wish to make is not that there was some kind of underlying 'totalitarian unity' at work, but rather that, in both cases, what was taking place was the impact of the masses upon the traditional forms of high art. This was to evoke, in very dissimilar circumstances, the same side-stepping of these traditional forms into the realms of mass expressivity, and both were to focus upon the festival as the most adequate form for containing this expressivity.

The rallies occupy a position midway between the initially non-administered form of 'Das Thing', and the baroque cult of the dead, planned and executed by the state and its leadership. The structure of the rallies continually made clear that the state had achieved a position of dominance over the party and also of Nazi society as a whole. The party was present and visible as a solid mass, only because the state had decreed this week-long period of festivity. During these Parteitag, the social and political spectacle was always one of a united, classless community: an arena was created in which this mass expressiveness was to be <u>permitted.</u>

However, cutting across the ranks of the faithful was the presence of the victorious state. They organised and administered the rallies, and they ensured that there was a plethora of podiums from which they could overlook the marching grounds. Here the leaders could look down upon, and address, the led. The 'mass ornaments' produced by those assembled below were only decipherable by an external spectator, and preferably one with an aerial view - (in this they depart significantly from those spectacles organised in Russia). Audience, performers and leaders were carefully separated from each other, always remaining distinct, with the high points of fusion being determined by the ruling elite, and these moments were usually those occasions when the leaders chose to address the masses. The whole event was interlaced by a strict hierarchy, with the state always firmly at the top. This complex separation of leaders and led 'betrayed' the real nature of Nazi society, since the masses they had called into being had now to be contained and 'administered'. The image of the 'high Volk', where leaders and followers met each other in an emotional symbiosis, and where all the intermediate political structures were swept aside, was in reality a vast cage where, for a week, the party could celebrate its defeat by the state.

## THE FANTASY OF THE STATE

If the mass-rally represented an area of mutual overlap, where the movement and the state neutralised that tension which existed between them, and where the construction of a political spectacle

in which the ideal 'National Community' was realised for a week, the Nazi state was to produce its own autonomous form of aesthetic/symbolic politics. However, its version of the 'National Community', and the symbols which it deployed to express this, were very different from those used by Das Thing movement and the mass-rallies.

To understand this symbolism, we have to return to the analysis of the Nazi state and its general relationship with Nazi society. I have already tried to outline how, in the specific historical conditions of Germany, the Nazi state after 1936 was able to achieve an extraordinary degree of autonomy from those ruling economic groups which had allowed the movement to assume political power. In addition to this, it had cut loose from many of the 'ideals' which had been the property of its followers prior to 1933. This autonomy had come about through the process of the dual resolution of a crisis situation. The first resolution had occured in 1933, and the second in 1936. In the first crisis, the Nazis had been supported and encouraged to take power because of the inability of the conflicting industrial and political blocs to reach a concensus over how to solve the economic crisis within the institutions of Weimar. The Nazis were brought into the picture in order to impose an authoritarian 'solution' to this dilemma. On gaining political power they were to smash the workers' movement, but they also agreed to eliminate those elements within the party who were calling for the completion of the anti-monopolistic 'second revolution'. In 1936 this

authoritarian spiral was given another twist, this time because of the state's ability to dominate,and make capital out of,the continuing splits within the ranks of big industry. This was to grant them an independence from their own political base, as well as from the the pressures applied by the large economic groupings. The net result of the state's successful navigation of these two crises was that:

> "The political leadership constructed for itself a position of supremacy which, in institutional terms, was autonomous and unshakeable and which, through its control of foreign policy, determined the direction of the system as a whole." (24)

This then was the structural basis upon which the elaboration of a state-based fantasy was able to exist. This was to provide the institutional bedrock which allowed Hitler to elaborate his gigantic architectural programmes in complete isolation from the rest of the Nazi system. However, there still remains a series of questions about the nature and content of these schemes which I think resolve themselves into three fundamental issues:

(i) Why was the realm of these symbolic architectural projects so large in the Nazi system? What was it that led the state to have such a predilection for this kind of activity?

(ii) The scale and 'monumentality' of such projects. Why did the Nazi state feel that it had to build on such a huge scale?

(iii) The symbolic themes and content deployed in these projects.

I want to deal with the first two questions together, since I think they form part of the same problem: why was there so much symbolic architecture, and why was it planned on such an enormous scale? The motivation to commit so much effort and resources to the building of monuments to itself lies in the general ideological framework of Nazi politics. The two major influences at work here were (i) the notion that the Nazis held of politics as the highest expression of the aesthetic impulse:

> "Politics is the highest and most comprehensive art there is, and we who shape modern German policy feel ourselves to be artists ... the task of art and the artist being to form, to give shape, to remove the diseased and create freedom for the healthy." (25);

and, closely related to this, (ii) the idea that the state was the most important institution in enabling this realisation of aesthetic politics. We have earlier seen that the Nazis had dismissed the idea of the state as the 'ensurer of fair play' as being liberalism, and that they had substituted the idea of the state as an active shaper of the social reality. But, having said this, we still have the problem of explaining why this was the ideology of the Nazi state, and the answer to this lies at a much deeper level. One of the major initial impulses of the Nazi movement had been one of revolt against capitalism, with the aim of its eventual supercession. It had, however, been unable to master either the dynamics of the society it had taken control of, or the inner logic of its own development in relation to this society. Instead of destroying the existing property relationships, it had become trapped inside them. The preservation of this capitalist system, in addition to its inability to master

its own development, had allowed the state to attain an unmatched concentration of power, making it independent of the society around it. This led to a situation where it had at its disposal the tremendous resources of a modern technological society, but had failed to master them and to bring them under any kind of rational control, even in terms of the demands of German industry. Its failure to achieve a true supercession had left it with only one route by which to deploy these resources, the politics of style, where, in Lukacs' terms, the only possible method of social organisation would be an aesthetic one in which society and the state would be regarded as works of art. Thus, the construction of these monuments was the aesthetic equivalent of its need to wage war: it was the only way to direct the technological resources at its command. This, I think, goes a long way to explaining the scale of these architectural projects; it was simply that, given the degree of power at the disposal of the Nazi state, it was able to build on a scale which had been impossible for societies before. In this context it must be remembered that all the projects dreamt up by Hitler were possibilities, and were definitely not beyond the means of Nazi society.

The final problem is the thematic content of these projects. In an earlier section I have argued that, given the situation of a strong authoritarian state, the most obvious stylistic model to be taken from the past is that of the Baroque, since this too had originated in a situation where the state and its political leadership had played a similar role. But, beyond the utilisation of this style of 'State Baroque', there was an equally persistent

theme running through these projects, and this was death, its most practical realisation being in the war-memorial. Here the Nazi state, albeit at a symbolic level, betrayed its ultimate bourgeois nature. Almost the only examples of the use of 'public' symbolism by the 19th century bourgeois state had been either the representation of its heroes, nationalistic or imperialistic, or the construction of more impersonal monuments to the masses who had died in their war projects. The Nazis, appearing during the 'unheroic' phase of capitalism, latched onto the latter form, and were to produce a whole range of projects devoted to the celebration of their mass dead - either of the First World War, or of the Party, or to those who were to come. One of their first projects on taking power was to be the complex on the Koenigsplatz in Munich in celebration of the dead of the party. The increasing accumulation of power by the state as the decade proceeded, allowed them a free rein to indulge this obsession with the dead:

> "after this, any place and any reason were used to justify the erection of a monument. There were to be submarine monuments, air-force monuments, and Freikorps monuments; what the Republic had failed to do in terms of building war-memorials was now done by the Nazis a thousand times over." (26)

The high point of this tendency was reached in two such projects. The first was the triumphal arch described earlier, which was to provide one of the focal points of Hitler's plans for the reconstruction of Berlin. On it were to be inscribed the names of the six million Germans who had been killed in the first World War. The second of these projects was only intended to be realised after the successful termination of the second World War. The Nazi Empire in Europe was

to be marked out by a series of huge war-memorials cum symbols of conquest:

> "On the rocky coast of the Atlantic there will grow up grandiose structures facing west, eternal monuments of the liberation of the continent from British dependence ... Massive towers stretching high in the eastern plains will grow into symbols of the subduing of the eastern steppes through the disciplined might of the Germanic forces of order." (27)

(Illustration No.33 ).

In the words of Walter Benjamin, in its symbolic architectural fantasies, had reached a position where "its self-alienation had reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order", (28).

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## List of Illustrations.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES


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4. K. Marx: "18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", in 'Selected Works of Marx and Engels', p98.

5. J. Lindsay: 'The Death of the Hero', pp90-91.

6. E. Delecluze in 'Le Peintre Louis David', by J.L.Jules David, p139; quoted in 'Neo-Classicism and Romanticism: 1750-1850', ed. L. Eitner, p134.

7. J. Lindsay: 'Death of the Hero', p45; Lindsay,unfortunately, does not give any references for the quotations he uses.

8. J.L. David, in a speech to the Convention made on August 8th, 1793: quoted in 'Neo-Classicism and Romanticism: 1750-1850', ed. L. Eitner.

9. J. Lindsay: 'The Death of the Hero', p94.

10. J. Lindsay: 'The Death of the Hero', p82.

11. J. Lindsay: 'The Death of the Hero', p72.

12. Quoted in 'Neo-Classicism and Romanticism: 1750-1850', ed. L. Eitner, p142.


## MODERN SOLUTIONS


1. W. Morris: 'The Aims of Art', London 1887; quoted in 'Realism and Tradition in Art: 1848-1900', ed. L. Nochlin, p141.

2. W. Benjamin: 'The Author as Producer', p89.

3. C. Baudelaire: 'Aesthetic Curiosities', quoted in 'Baudelaire: the Artist and his Work', Poulet and Kopp, p29.

4. C. Baudelaire: 'Oeuvres Completes', p605.

5. Delacroix: 'Journals'

6. K. Marx: 'A Critique of Political Economy', pp310-311.

7. Ford Madox Brown: from the exhibition catalogue 1865; quoted in 'Realism and Tradition in Art: 1848-1900', ed. L. Nochlin, p95.

THE WORK OF THE AVANT-GARDE

8. The term 'Constructivism' is really just one of a number of tendencies which existed in the post-revolutionary artistic scene in Russia, but it has gradually become synonomous with the whole of the post-revolutionary artistic avant-garde.

9. Stanley Mitchell: "Marinetti and Mayakovsky", 'Screen' Winter 1971/72, p154.

10. F.T. Marinetti: "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism, 1909", in 'Futurist Manifestos', ed. Umbro Apollonio, p23.

11. F.T. Marinetti: "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism, 1909", in 'Futurist Manifestos', ed. Umbro Apollonio, p23

12. Boccioni, Carra, Russolo, Balla, Severini: "Manifesto of the Futurist Painters, 1910", in 'Futurist Manifestos', ed. Umbro Apollonio, p25.

13. P. Valery: "The Conquest of Ubiquity", in 'Aesthetics', p225.

14. U. Boccioni: "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture, 1912", in 'Futurist Manifestos', ed. Umbro Apollonio, p52.

15. U. Boccioni, C. Carra, L. Russolo, G. Balla, G. Severini: "Futurist Painting Technical Manifesto 1910", in 'Futurist Manifestos', ed. Umbro Apollonio, p28.

16. F.T. Marinetti: "Destruction of Syntax - Imagination without strings - Words - in - Freedom 1913", in 'Futurist Manifestos', ed. Umbro Apollonio, p98.

17. S. Tretakov: "Where from, Where to?", in 'Lef' No.1, 1923; quoted in "From Shklovsky to Brechy; a Reply", in 'Screen', Summer 1974, p90.

18. "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste", 1912; quoted in "Documents from Lef", trans. R. Sherwood, in 'Screen', Winter 1971/72, p25.

19. Letter of David Burliuk; quoted in "The Constructivist Ethos", part I, by Ron Hunt, in 'Art Forum', September 1967, p25.

20. F.T. Marinetti: "The Variety Theatre: 1913", in 'Futurist Manifestos', ed. Umbro Apollonio, p127.

21. Meyerhold: no reference given, but quoted in 'Art in Revolution', catalogue of the 1971 exhibition held at the Hayward Gallery in London, p80.

22. R. Füelop-Miller: 'The Mind and Face of Bolshevism', pp126-127.

23. Evreinov, quoted in "The Constructivist Ethos", part II, by Ron Hunt, 'Art Forum', October 1967, p27.

24. Unovis broadsheet, No.1, Vitebsk, 1920; quoted in 'Poetry Must be Made by All', the catalogue of an exhibition held in Stockholm, 1969.

25. El Lissitsky: 'New Russian Art'; quoted in 'Poetry Must Be Made By All', p25.

26. Eisenstein: "Notes on Mayakovsky"; quoted in 'Poetry Must Be Made by All', p18.

27. V. Tatlin: 'The Work Ahead of Us', 1920; quoted in 'Poetry Must Be Made By All', p21.

28. V. Tatlin: interview with K. Zelinsky; quoted in catalogue for the Tatlin exhibition in Stockholm, 1968, p78.

29. O. Brik: "From Picture to Calico Print", Lef, Vol VI, p27, pp30-31, p34; quoted in Screen, Winter 1971/72, p51, "Documents from Lef", translated, edited & introduced by R. Sherwood.

30. Manifesto, "Whom is Lef Alerting?", Lef, Vol 1; Screen, Winter 1971/72, p35.

31. O. Brik: "From Picture to Calico Print", Lef, Vol VI; quoted in Screen, Winter 1971/72, p51.

32. B. Arvatov: "Utopia or Science?", Lef,Vol IV, pp16-21; quoted in Screen, Winter 1971/72, p46.

33. O. Brik: "From Picture to Calico Print", Lef,Vol VI, p27, pp30-31, p34; quoted in Screen, Winter 1971/72, p51.

34. R. Füelop-Miller: 'The Mind and Face of Bolshevism', p183.

35. W. Benjamin: "The Author as Producer", p98, 'Understanding Brecht'.

36. W. Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", 'Illuminations', p241.

## CHAPTER II: NAZI ART & AESTHETICS

1. Quoted in 'The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony, 1921-33', by J. Noakes, p211.

2. K.D. Bracher: 'The German Dictatorship', p186.

3. W. Darré: 'Rede des Reichsbauernfuhrers und Reichsministers' R. Walther Darré',May 27th 1934, pp5-7; quoted in 'Nazi Culture',ed.G. Mosse, p150.

4. G. Feder: 'Das Programm der NSDAP und seine weltanschauliche Grundgedanken', Munich, 1932, p46; quoted in 'The German Dictatorship' by K.D. Bracher, p186.

5. J. Noakes: 'The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony, 1921-1933', p210.

6. T.W. Adorno: "Notes on Kafka", in 'Prisms', pp259-260.

7. R. Vaneigem: 'The Revolution of Everday Life', p20. London 1975

8. P. Schultze-Naumburg: article in 'Deutsche Bauzeitung', 1926; quoted in B. Miller Lane, 'Architecture and Politics in Germany: 1918-1945', p134.

9. Emil Högg: speech delivered to the National Congress of German Architects and Engineers, 1926; quoted in B.M. Lane, 'Architecture and Politics in Germany: 1918-1945', p137.

10. B. Miller-Lane: 'Architecture & Politics in Germany: 1918-1945', p12.

11. W. Benjamin: 'Charles Baudelaire', p159.

12. T. Mann: 'Von Deutscher Republic', 1925; quoted in F. Stern, 'The Politics of Cultural Despair', p134.

13. A. Rosenberg: speech made on June 7th, 1935; quoted in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p162.

14. W. Darré. 'Rede des Reichsbauernfuhrers und Reichsministers R. Walther Darré', May 27th 1934; quoted in 'Nazi Culture', ed. G. Mosse, p148.

15. G. Mosse: 'The Crisis in German Ideology', p24.

16. P. Lagarde: quoted in "Erinnerungen", Anna Lagarde, p164, in F. Stern 'The Politics of Cultural Despair', p32.

17. A. Hitler: 'Mein Kampf', p239.

18. L.F. Clauss: "Die Nordische Seele: Eine Einfuhrung in die Rassenseelenkunde", 1932; quoted in 'Nazi Culture', ed. G. Mosse, p70.

19. P. Sedgewick: "The Problem of Fascism", 'International Socialism' No.42, Feb-March 1970, p33.

20. Example quoted in 'The Crisis in German Ideology, G. Mosse, p103.

21. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts'; extracts translated in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p38.

22. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts'; quoted in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p79.

23. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts'; quoted in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p75.

24. G. Mosse: 'Nazi Culture', p7.

25. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten'; quoted in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed.R. Pois, p.176.

26. A. Hitler: 'Mein Kampf', p234.

27. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Der Mythus des 20.Jahrhunderts'; quoted in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p149.

28. Alfred Rosenberg: source as above, p151.

29. A. Hitler: in a speech at the 1934 Nuremburg Congress, 5th/6th September; quoted in K.D. Bracher, 'The German Dictatorship', p310.

30. R. Aron: 'German Sociology', p96.

31. Adolf Hitler: in a speech made on 31st March 1933 in Potsdam; quoted in K.D. Bracher, 'The German Dictatorship', p44.

32. Thomas Mann: 'Doctor Faustus', p461.

33. A. Hitler: 'Mein Kampf', p238.

34. J. Goebbels: in a speech made on 8th May, 1933; quoted in K.D. Bracher, 'The German Dictatorship', p322.

35. K. Marx: 'A Critique of Political Economy', pp20-21.

36. Adolf Hitler in conversation with Otto Strasser, 21st May, 1930; quoted in N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p567.

37. Adolf Hitler: in a speech made in Munich on July 18th, 1937; quoted in G. Mosse, 'Nazi Culture', p11.

38. Adolf Hitler: from the speech as above; quoted in G. Mosse, 'Nazi Culture', p13.

39. Alfred Rosenberg: in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p161.

40. Count Baudissin: quoted in 'The Shock of the New', by Ian Dunlop, p233; no reference given.

41. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremburg on 11th Sept., 1935; quoted in N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p576.

42. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremburg, 6th Sept., 1938; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p598.

43. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremburg, 11th Sept., 1935; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p578.

44. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Munich, 18th July 1937; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', pp 591-592.

45. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremburg, 11th Sept.,1935; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p576.

46. A. Hitler: source as above.

47. A. Hitler: source as above; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p571.

48. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremburg, 6th Sept.,1938; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p599.

49. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Munich on 18th July, 1937; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p591.

50. A. Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremburg, 11th Sept.,1935; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p575.

51. A. Hitler: speech delivered in Munich, 18th July, 1937; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p592.

52. A. Hitler: speech delivered in Munich, 18th July, 1937; N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p590.

53. L. Trotsky: quoted in R.F. Miller, 'The Mind and Face of Bolshevism', p214; no reference given.

54. J. Goebbels: address delivered to the annual congress of the Reich Chamber of Culture & Strength through Joy organisation, in Berlin, November 26th, 1937; quoted in 'Nazi Culture', ed. G. Mosse, p152.

55. J. Goebbels: source as above, p152.

56. J. Goebbels: source as above, p152.

57. J. Goebbels: source as above, p152.

58. J. Goebbels: source as above, p155.

59. J. Goebbels: source as above, p155.

60. J. Goebbels: source as above.

61. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Der Weltkampf', November 1925; in 'The Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R.Pois, pp156-157.

62. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts'; in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p127.

63. Alfred Rosenberg: source as above, p129.

64. Alfred Rosenberg: 'Der Weltkampf', November 1925; in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R. Pois, p153.

65. Alfred Rosenberg: source as above, p155.

66. Alfred Rosenberg: source as above, p156.

## CHAPTER III: THE PERIOD OF CONTROVERSIES & THE SEARCH FOR A STYLE

1. Emil Nolde: 'The Second World War 1919-1946', Stiftung Seebull Ada, Cologne 1967, p129ff; quoted in 'The Voices of Expressionism', ed. V.H. Meisel, p210.

2. Klaus Berger: quoted in 'The Voices of Expressionism', ed. V.H. Meisel, pp204-206; no reference given.

3. P. Schultze-Naumburg: 'Kunst und Rasse', Munich 1928; quoted in I. Dunlop, 'The Shock of the New', p230.

4. P. Schultze-Naumburg: 'Kunst und Rasse', Munich 1928; quoted in B. Miller-Lane, op.cit., p138.

5. H. Brenner: "Art in the Political Power Struggle of 1933-34'; quoted in H. Holborn, 'Republic to Reich', p428.

6. P. Schultze-Naumburg: article in the 'Völkische Beobachter', March 5th, 1931; quoted in B. Miller-Lane 'Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945', p159.

7. Described in G. Mosse, 'Crisis in German Ideology', pp186-7.

8. Quoted in H. Holborn, 'Republic to Reich', p403.

9. "Revolution in the Fine Arts?" , Völkische Beobachter, July 6th 1933; and "Revolution for its Own Sake", Völkische Beobachter, July 14th 1933.

10. Alfred Rosenberg: "Revolution in the Fine Arts?"; in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R.Pois, p159.

11. Alfred Rosenberg: source as above.

12. Alfred Rosenberg: "Revolution in the Fine Arts?"; in 'Selected Writings of Alfred Rosenberg', ed. R.Pois, pp160-61.

13. Alfred Rosenberg: source as above, p162.

14. Alfred Rosenberg: in Volkische Beobachter, July 14th 1933; in H. Holborn, 'Republic to Reich', p405.

15. Otto Schreiber: quoted in H. Brenner "Art in the Political Power Struggle, 1933-34"; in H. Holborn 'Republic to Reich'.

16. J. Goebbels: article in Volkische Beobachter, November 16th 1933; quoted in B.M. Lane, 'Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945', p176.

17. Alfred Rosenberg: article in Volkische Beobachter, March 16th 1934; quoted in H. Brenner "Art in the Political Power Struggle, 1933-34", p411.

18. R. Scholz: article in Volkische Beobachter, March 28th 1935; quoted in H. Brenner, "Art in the Political Power Struggle", p412.

19. Ruggero Vasari: quoted from 'Kunst der Nation', April 15th 1934, in H. Brenner, "Art in the Political Power Struggle", p413.

20. C.H. Theunissen: 'Kunst der Nation', April 15th 1934; source as above.

21. Adolf Hitler: speech delivered in Nuremburg on September 5th, 1934; quoted in H. Brenner, "Art in the Political Power Struggle", p422.

22. Adolf Hitler: source as above, p423.

23. Adolf Hitler: source as above.

24. In his article, "German Expressionism in the Plastic Arts and Nazism" ('German Life & Letters', April 1968), Pois uses a variant of the 'totalitarian' analysis of Nazi Germany, when he talks about the necessary destruction of all tendencies within the arts in order that 'Hitler's will' could play freely over all aspects of Nazi society. According to his logic, Nazi art policy becomes arbitrary, since it is simply shaped by Hitler's will which, in turn, is depicted as the ultimate manifestation of totalitarian arbitrariness. What he overlooks are the determinants operating upon this will, which was certainly not arbitrary after 1933, but had to come to terms with the constraints imposed upon it by the reorganisation of German industry.

CHAPTER IV: THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

1. R.A. Brady: 'The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism', New York 1937.

2. Martin Mobius: 'Das Deutsche Wort' March/April 1937; quoted in C.P. Magill, "Totalitarian Literature", 'German Life and Letters', July 1938, p242.

3. G.W. Muller: Das Reichsministerium fur Volksaufklarung und Propaganda: Berlin 1940; quoted in E.K. Bramstedt, 'Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda; 1925-45', p62.

4. J. Goebbels: quoted in 'The Goebbels Experiment; A Study of the Nazi Propaganda Machine', Sington & Weidenfield; no reference given.

5. Source lost.

6. Reichs Chamber of Culture, Decree of 1st November 1933; quoted in E.K. Bramstedt, 'Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda; 1925-45', p76.

7. Presse in Fesselen, Appendix IV; quoted in E.K. Bramstedt, as above, p77.

8. K.F. Schreiber: 'Deutsches Kulturrecht', Hamburg 1936; quoted in R.A. Brady, 'The Spirit & Structure of German Fascism', p88.

9. Deutches Kulturrecht, 1936; source as above, p94.

10. J. Goebbels: no source given.

11. Dr. B. Payr: article in Volkische Beobachter, August 15th 1937; quoted in C.P. Magill, "Totalitarian Literature", in 'German Life and Letters', July 1938.

12. Quoted B.Miller-Lane, op.cit., p182.

13. Alfred Rosenberg: "News in Brief", No 23/24; quoted in Brady, op.cit., p99.

14. Alfred Rosenberg: "News in Brief", Vol II, No.17; quoted in Brady, op.cit., p100.

CHAPTER V: SOME PROBLEMS IN NAZI ARCHITECTURE

1. Tim Mason: "Labour in the Third Reich, 1933-39", Past and Present, No.33, p114.

2. B.M. Lane: 'Architecture and Politics in Germany; 1918-1945', p216.

3. B.M. Lane: source as above, p199.

4. Baldur von Schirach: reference lost.

5. B.M. Lane: 'Architecture and Politics in Germany; 1918-1945', p199.

6. Adolf Hitler: quoted in Albert Speer, 'Inside the Third Reich', p64.

7. Gottfried Feder, Reichs Housing Commisar: 'Das Deutsche Siedlungswerk', Siedlung und Wirtschaft (xvi), 1934; quoted in B.M. Lane, 'Architecture and Politics in Germany; 1918-1945', pp205-206.

7a. Feder disappeared in a concentration camp shortly after making this statement.

8. Tim Mason: "Labour in the Third Reich, 1933-39", 'Past and Present', No.33, p129.

9. Lewis Mumford: 'The City in History', p81.

10. Albert Speer: 'Inside the Third Reich', p139.

11. Adolf Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremberg in September 1937; quoted in N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p593.

12. Adolf Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremberg, September 1935; source as above, p581.

13. Adolf Hitler: source as above, p583.

14. Adolf Hitler: source as above, p582.

15. Albert Speer: 'Inside the Third Reich', p528.

16. Adolf Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremberg, September 1937; quoted in N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p594.

17. Lewis Mumford: 'The City in History', p81.

18. Source as above, p457.

19. Adolf Hitler: speech delivered at Nuremberg, September 1937; quoted in N. Bayes, 'The Speeches of Adolf Hitler', p591.

20. R. Grunberger: 'A Social History of the Third Reich', p536.

21. Source as above, p537.

22. Lewis Mumford: 'The City in History', p445.

23. Albert Speer: 'Inside the Third Reich', p135

24. Source as above, p137.

25. Source as above, p136.

26. Source as above, p139.

27. Source as above, p159.

CHAPTER VI: NAZI PAINTING

1. Charles Baudelaire: 'Complete Works', p605.

2. Hans Roethel: 'Modern German Painting', p60.

3. Kristian Sotriffer: 'Modern Austrian Art'.

4. Georgs Schmidt: 'Malerei im Deutschland'.

5. G. Lukacs: 'History and Class-Consciousness', p49.

6. Arnold Gehlen: "Zeit - Bilder - Zur Sociologie und Astletik der moderner Malerei", p41; quoted in Berthold Hinz, "Malerei des deutschen Fascismus"; in the catalogue 'Kunst im Dritten Reich', Frankfurt 1974, p124.

7. Herman Beenker: 'Das 19 Jahrhundert in der deutschen Kunst', Munich 1944; quoted in "Die Darstellung des Bauern", Bartezko, Glossman, Voigtlander-Tetzner, in 'Kunst im Dritten Reich', p146.

8. F.A. Kauffman: "Die neue deutsche Malerei" (Deutsche Informationsstelle 'Das Deutschland der Gegenwart', No.11), Berlin 1941; quoted in "Malerei des deutschen Fascismus", Berthold Hinz, in 'Kunst im Dritten Reich', p125.

9. W. Darre: in 'Die Agrarpolitik des Nationalsozialismus', 1935; quoted in "Die Darstellung des Bauern", Bartezko, Glossman, Voigtlander-Tetzner, in 'Kunst im Dritten Reich', p150.

10. Lewis Mumford: 'The City in History', p398.

11. Tim Mason: "Economics in National Socialist Germany", in 'The Nature of Fascism', ed. S.J. Woolf, p193.

12. Alfred Rosenberg: quoted by H. Brenner, 'Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus'.

13. Tim Mason: "The Nazi Economy", 'Purnell's History of the 20th Century', p1394.

14. Arbeiterturm Jg, 3rd July, 1937; quoted in P. Schirmbeck, "Darstellung der Arbeit", in 'Kunst im Dritten Reich', p172.

15. Mutschman, Gauleiter of Sachsen: Verband der Fabrikarbeiter Deutschlands, Materialsammlung und Vortragsdisposition: Gegen nationalsozialistische Zerstörungsarbeit: October 1931, p18; quoted in Schirmbeck, "Darstellung der Arbeit", in 'Kunst im Dritten Reich', p180.

16. Arbeiterturm, Jg. 37: quoted in Schirmbeck, as above, p174.

17. Susan Sontag: "Fascinating Fascism", 'New York Review of Books', February 6th 1975.

18. E. Hubert: "Das ist Nationalsozialismus", pp121-122; quoted in 'Nazi Culture', ed. G. Mosse, p47.

19. Das Schwarze Korps, 25.11.37: quoted in 'Strength Through Joy', P. Bleuel, p189.

## CHAPTER VII: RALLIES & FESTIVALS

1. J.-J. Rousseau: 'Lettre à D'Alembert', pp172-173.

2. A recent example of this occurs in "Problems of a Theory of German Fascism" by R. Kühnl, New German Critique No.4.: "If the social content of fascist politics is bracketed out, and if the analysis is limited to formal appearances - uniforms, demonstrations, ideology, the fuhrer principle and terror - the potential for, as well as the causes and essence of, fascism are prevented from being understood from the outset" (p49).

   Surely the important task is to intergrate the elements mentioned in the above quotation - (which, after all, make up a considerable portion of the experience of individuals who supported and lived under Nazism) - into a total analysis of Nazism, and not simply to confine them to a marginal, epiphenomenal status.

3. N. Poulantzas: 'Fascism and Dictatorship'.

4. A.G. Rabinbach: "Toward a Marxist Theory of Fascism and National Socialism", p145, New German Critique No.3.

5. Tim Mason: "Economics in National Socialist Germany", in 'The Nature of Fascism', ed. S.J. Woolf.

6. A. Mazaev: "Mass Festivals of the 1920's", Dekorativnoe Isskustvo No.11, 1966; quoted in 'Poetry Must Be Made By All', ed. Ron Hunt.

7. S. Kracauer: "The Mass Ornament", p67, New German Critique No.5.

8. Wilhelm von Schramm: 'Laws of the Conservative Revolution'; quoted in H. Brenner, 'Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus'.

9. Description of a Thing play by Euringer; in H. Brenner, 'Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus'.

10. Rainer Schlosser: quoted in H. Brenner as above.

11. Description by Michels (Propaganda director of the Koblenz district) of a Thing play he planned to stage.

12. Wolf Braumuller, spokesman for the National Socialist Culture Group: quoted in H. Brenner, 'Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus'. The section in Brenner's book on the 'Das Thing' movement was translated for me privately, and the translator omitted the page references of the original text.

13. Wolf Braumuller: in Deutsche Buhnenkorrespondenz, 20th July 1935; quoted in R. Grunberger, 'The Social History of the Third Reich', p460.

14. S. Kracauer: "The Mass Ornament", New German Critique No.5.

15. J. Elderfield: "Total and Totalitarian Art", Studio International, April 1970, p152.

16. H.T. Burden: 'The Nuremberg Party Rallies', & D. Guerin: 'Fascism and Big Business'.

17. H.T. Burden: 'The Nuremberg Party Rallies', p143.

18. D. Guerin: 'Fascism and Big Business', p74.

19. H.T. Burden: 'The Nuremberg Party Rallies', p141.

20. W. Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Illuminations, p241.

21. Albert Speer: 'Inside the Third Reich', p59.

22. F. Leger: "A New Space in Architecture", 'The Functions of Painting', p158.

23. Source as above.

24. Tim Mason: "Economics in National Socialist Germany", in 'The Nature of Fascism', ed. S.J. Woolf, p189.

25. J. Goebbels: quoted in S. Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism", New York Review of Books, February 6th 1975; no reference given.

26. B. Hinz: "Monumentality and its Principle", 'Kunst im 3rd Reich', p104.

27. Das Bauen in neuen Reich, Vol II, p7; quoted in R. Grunberger, 'A Social History of the Third Reich', p542.

28. W. Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Illuminations, p242.

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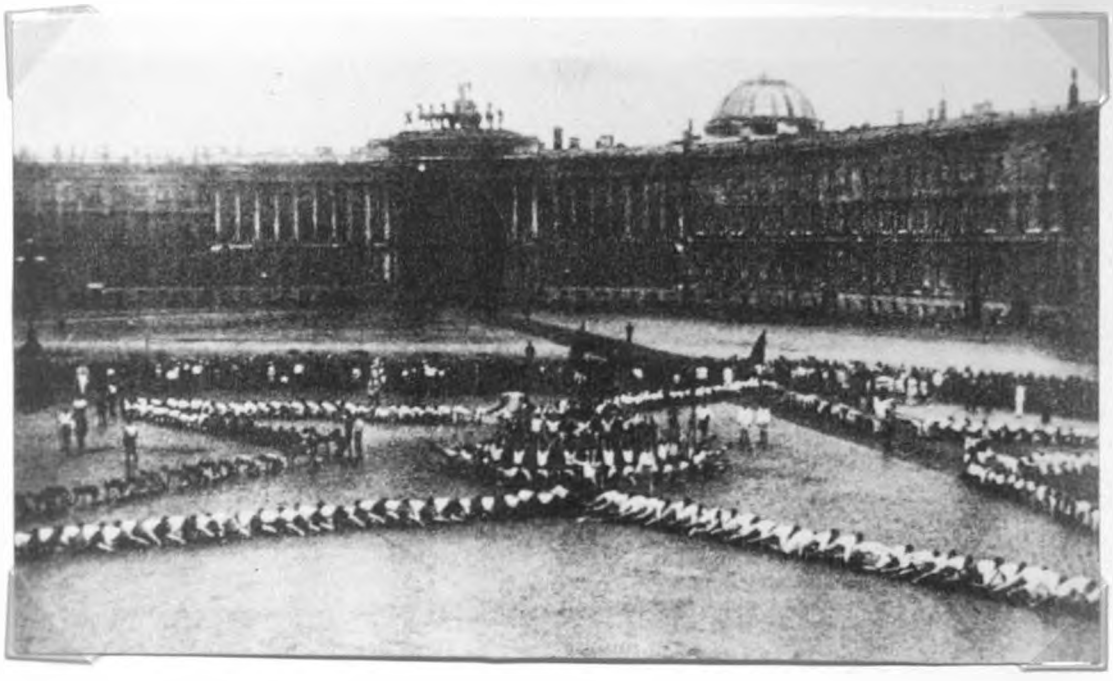
## Illustrations.

I. The Embarkation to Cythera. Watteau. 1718–1719.

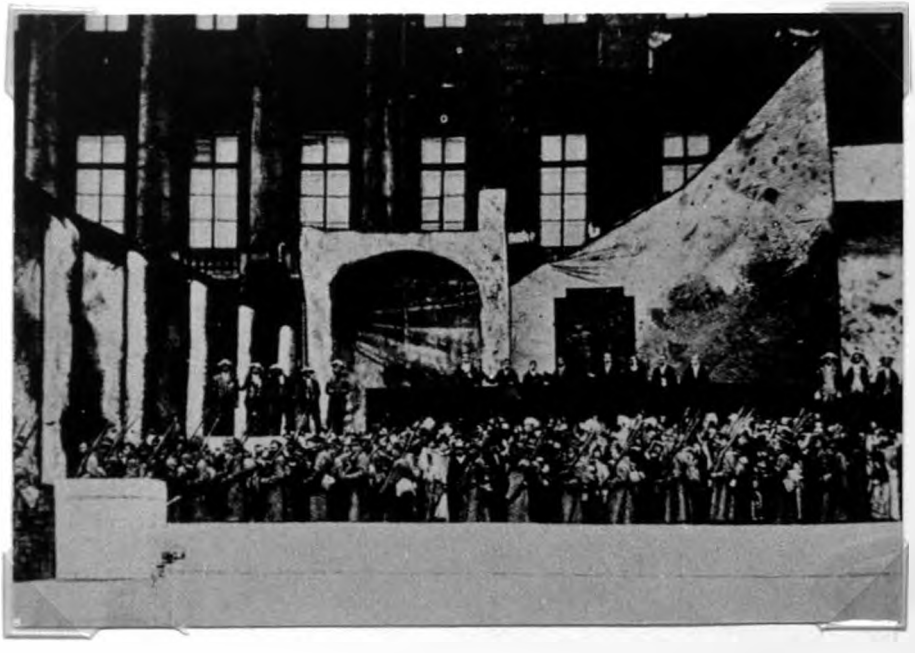

2. The Oath of the Horatii. J.L.David 1785.

3. The Tennis Court Oath. J.L.David.

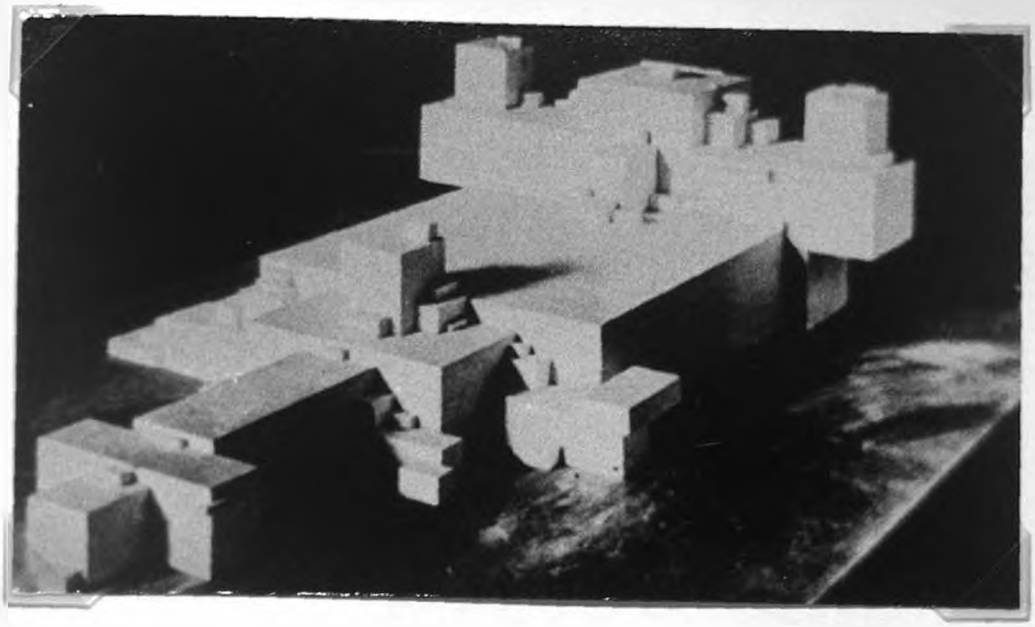
4. The Harvest. K.Malevitch.1913.



5. Soviet Gymnastic Display.directed by Meyerhold.I920

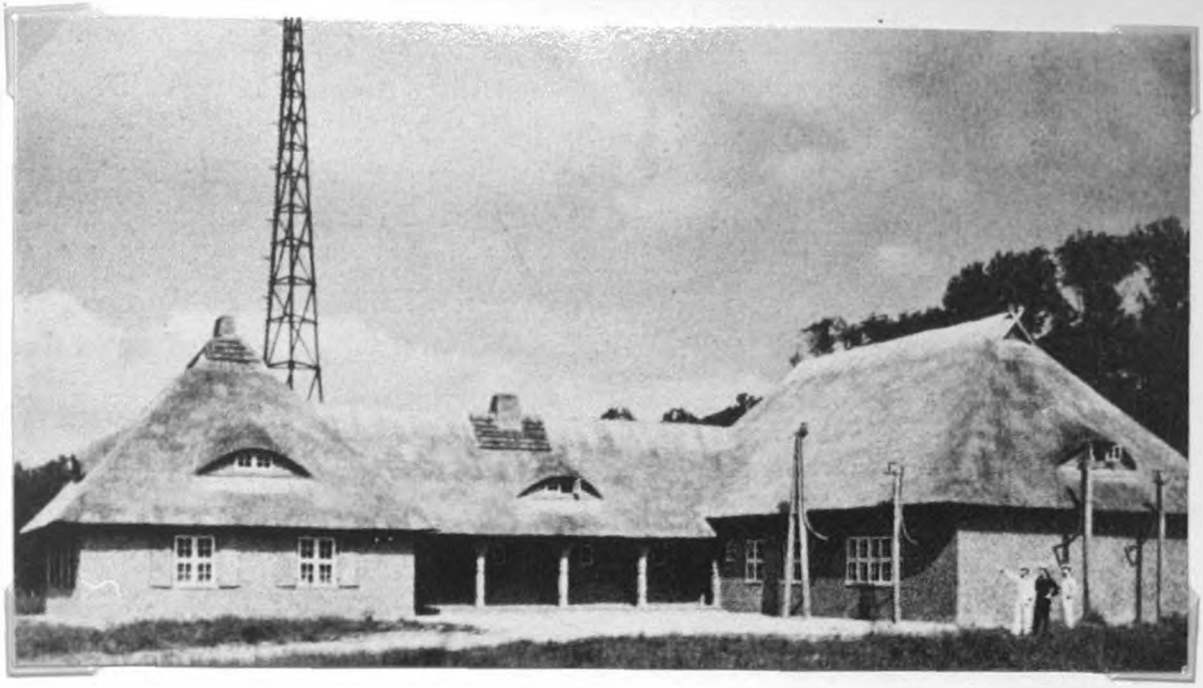


6. Storming the Winter Palace (re-enactment).Leningrad.I920



7. Suprematic Architectona.K.Malevitch.abt 1923-25.

8. Hitler Youth Hostel



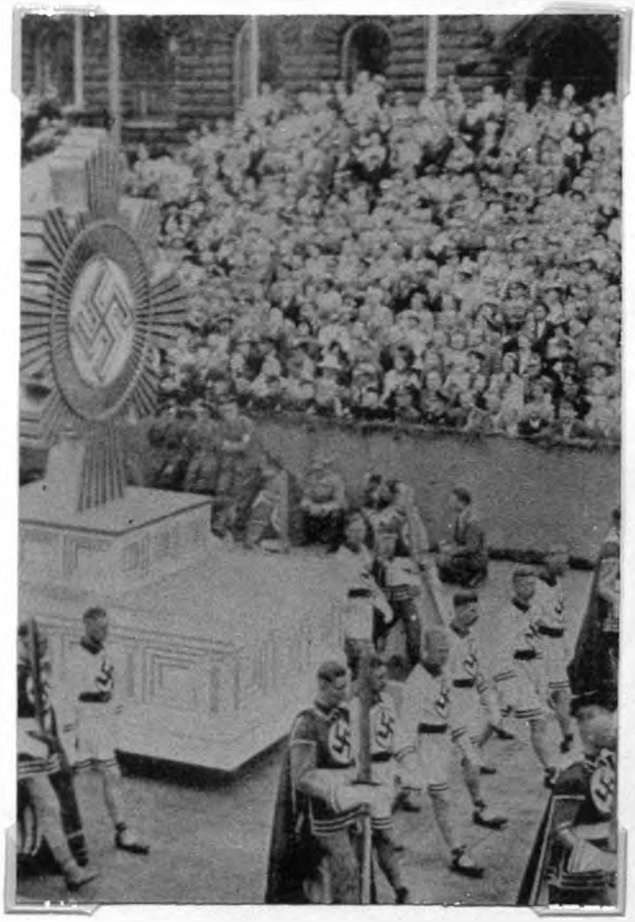
9. Air Ministry Weather Broadcasting Station.

IO. Housing Development.Aachen

II.Siedlung Heddernheim.Frankfurt.

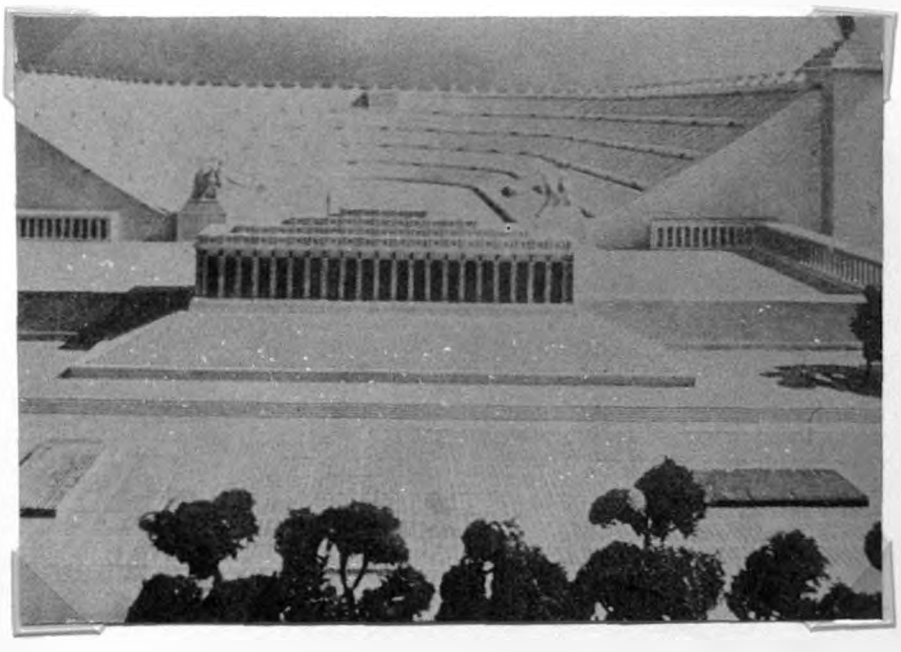
I2. Apartment Buildings. Nurnberg

I3. House of German Art.Paul Ludwig Troost.Munich I937.



I4. Procession at the opening of the House of German Art.
Munich.I937.

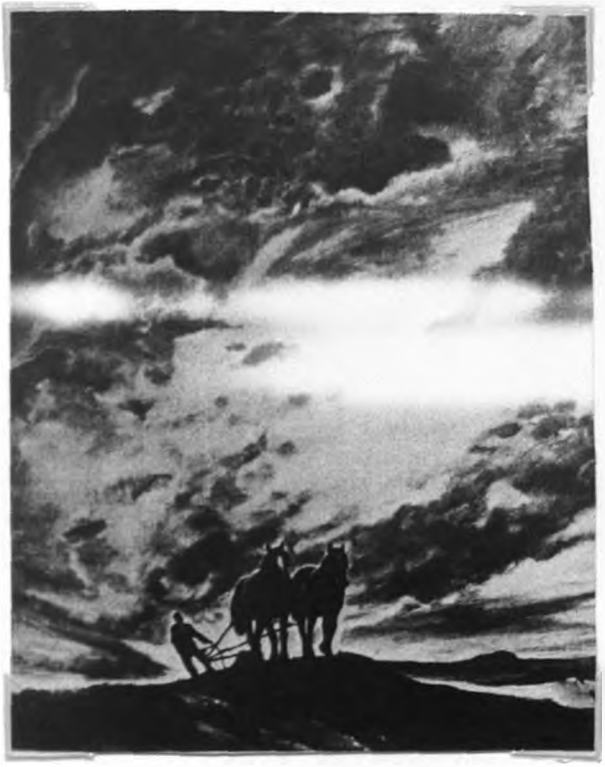
I5. Party Complex at Nurnberg. Albert Speer. Model.



I6. Party Stadium.Nurnberg.Albert Speer.Impression.

I7. The Shoemaker. Adolph Wissel.

I8. Deutsche Erde. Werner Peiner. I933.

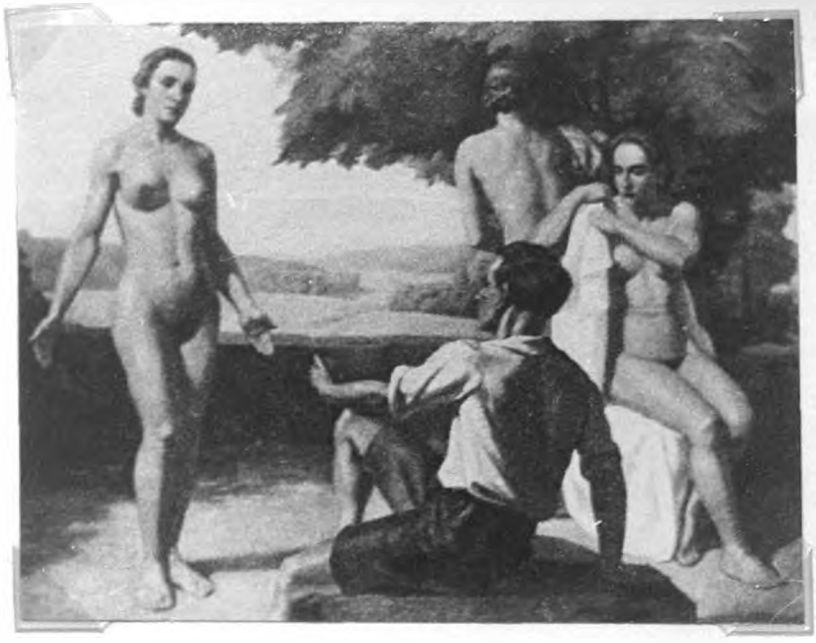


I9. Pfluger am Abend.W.Jackel. I939.

20.Robbed of House and Home. Adolph Reich

21. Farmers Family from Kahlenberg. Adolf Wissel.

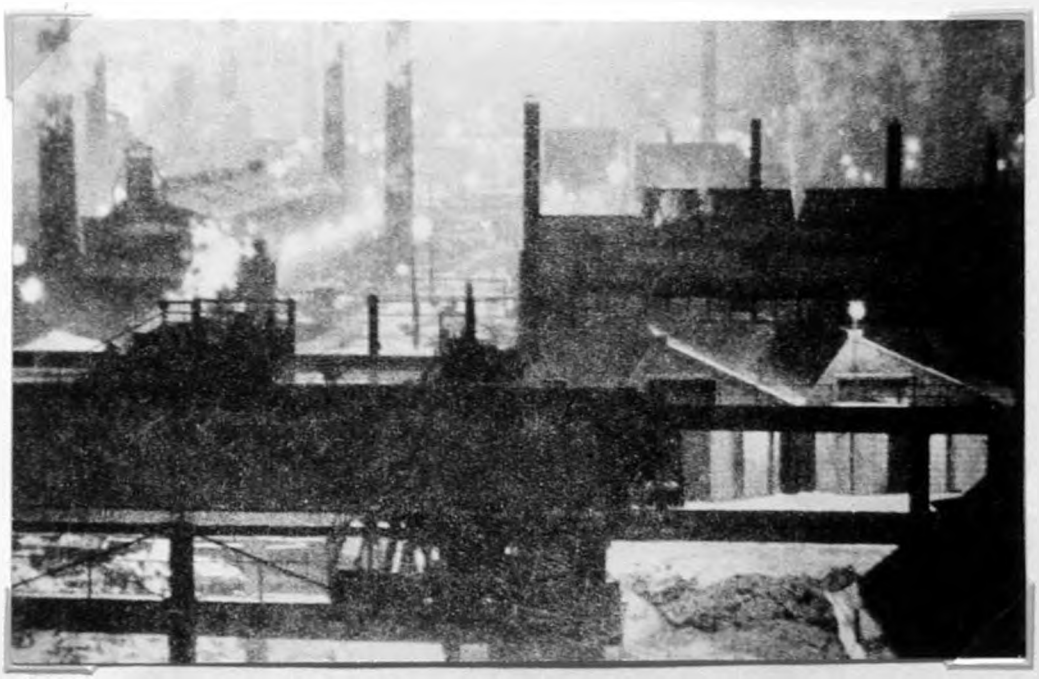
22. Venus and Adonis. Kamps. 1933.



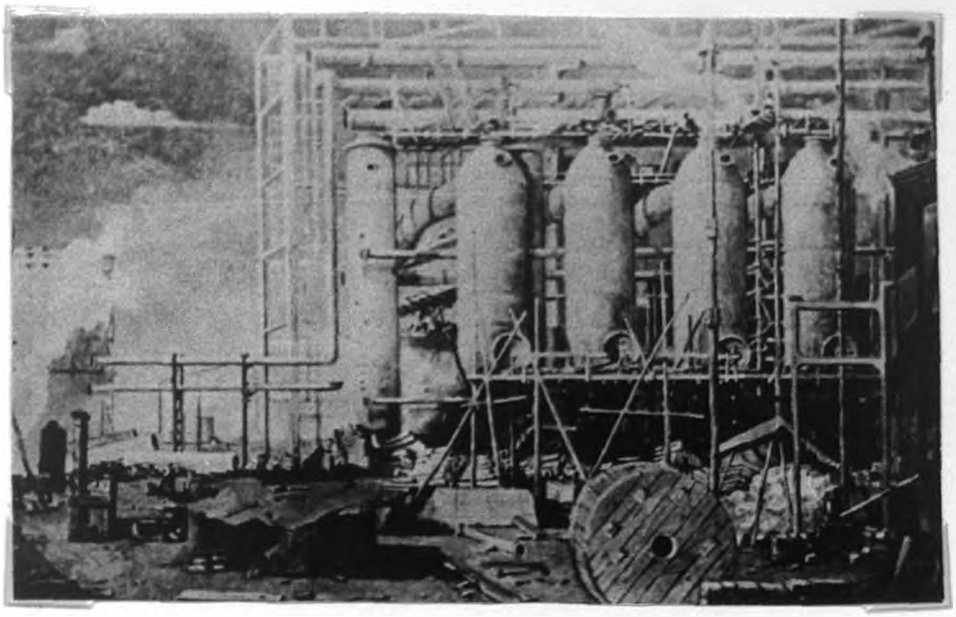
23. The Judgement of Paris. Ivo Saliger. 1939.

24. Walzwerk. Arthur Kampf.

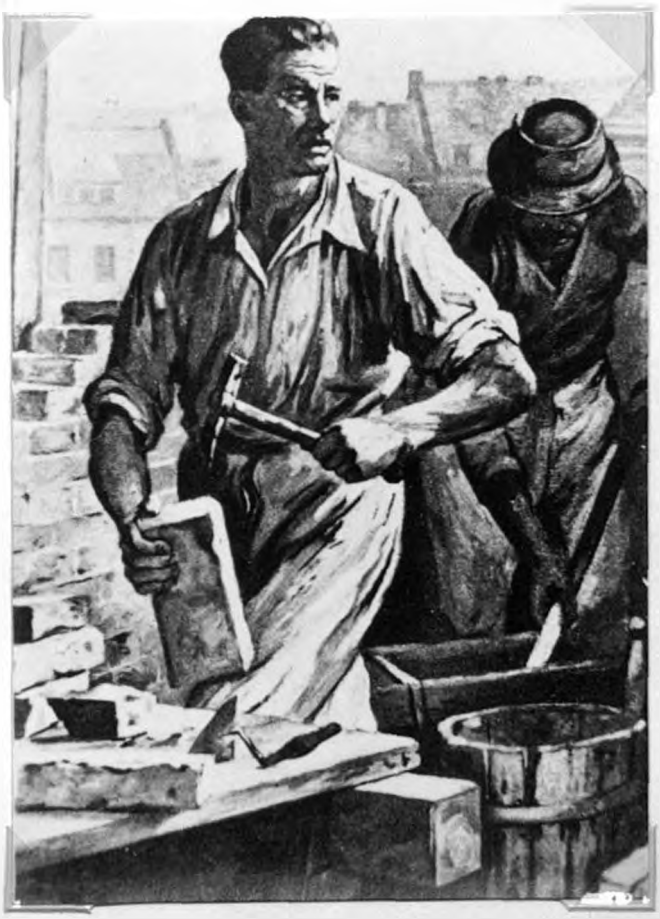
25. Die Werksoldaten.F.Staeger. 1938.



26. Winter Night above Koenigshutte. Domnich.



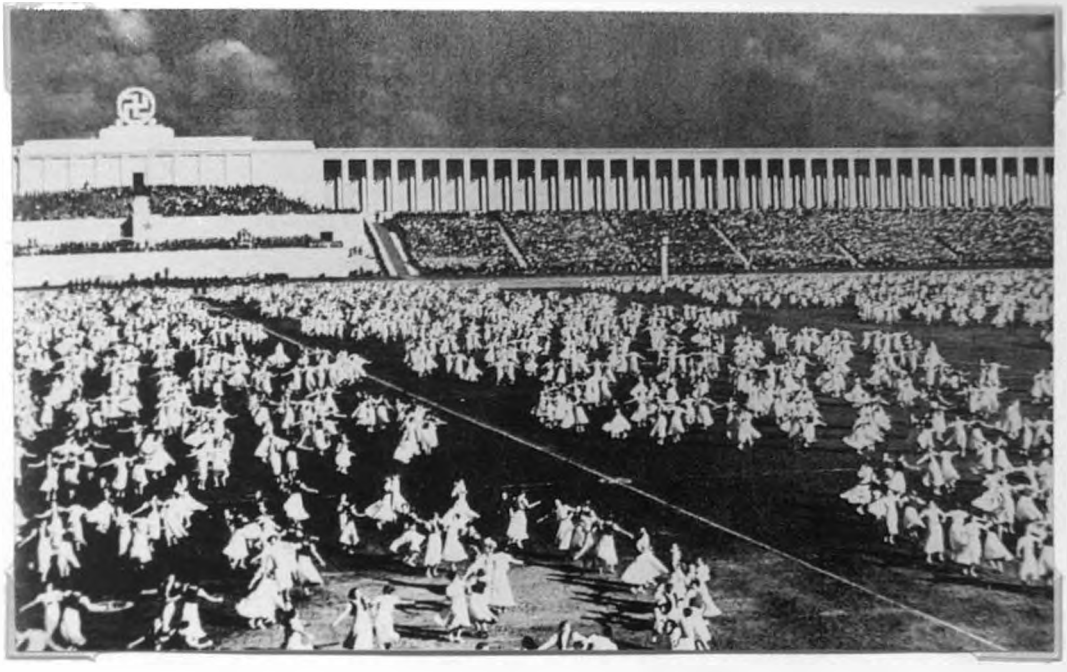
27. Freibstoffwerke im Bau,G.D.K. R. Gessner. I94I



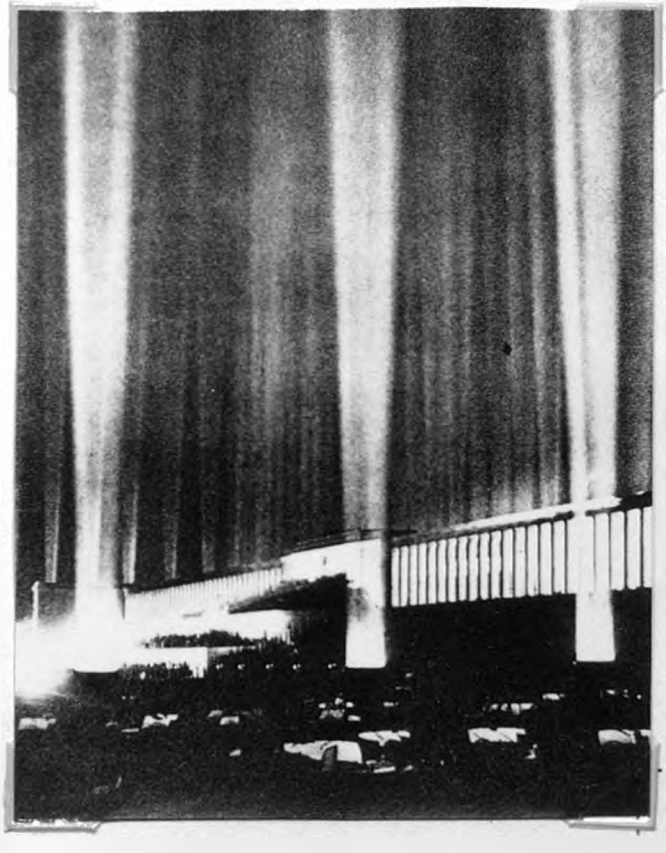
28. Mortel und Stein. Sohn-Skuw=. I937.

29. Mutter und Kind. K. Diebitsch.

30. Bath in a Mountain Lake. Julius Engelhard. 1944.



31 Nazi Gymnastic Display. Zeppelin field, Nurnberg.



32. Architecture of Light. Albert Speer. Zeppelin Field, Numberg.

33. Totenberg. Impression.